SWINBURNE

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FROM

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

A. C. SWINBURNE

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FROM THE LATEST ENGLISH EDITION OF HIS WORKS.

EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION.

If the history of English poetry teaches us any thing, it teaches us that the succession of poets who have illustrated it since Chaucer is divided into two classes, one of which may be said to represent the characteristics of the periods wherein it flourished, while the other may be said to represent the characteristics of the line which it perpetuates. Belonging to the first class were the successors of Shakespeare, who was an evolution of the dramatic element of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the successors of Dryden, particularly Pope, who was an evolution of the satiric element of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the successors of Thomson, particularly Cowper and Wordsworth, who were an evolution of the nature-element of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are, of course, other elements than those I have indicated, in the verse of these poets and their followers, for no poet worthy of the name was ever content to play upon one string; but it was rather as evolutions of these elements that they rose to distinction, and are remembered now, than as intense individualities such as from time to time appear in religion, in philosophy, in politics, and in art, and found dynasties. The first of these powerful personalities in English poetry was Christopher Marlowe. Born two months before Shakespeare, the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, nothing is known of his childhood or youth except that he was admitted to the King's School in his native city,

where he remained three or four years; and that he was removed to Cambridge, where he became a member of Benet College, and was matriculated as pensioner shortly after the completion of his seventeenth year. Two years later he took the degree of A.B., and, four years later, that of A.M. He is believed to have owed his maintenance at college to some wealthy relative, or some patron whose favor he won by early indications of genius; and it is plain, Dyce thinks, that he was educated with a view to one of the learned professions: most probably he was intended for the Church. But churchman he was not to be; for, like Greene and Nash, who had preceded him, he made his way up to London, and became a player and a dramatist. Precisely when this occurred has not been ascertained: all that is certain is, that his first play, the first part of "Tamburlaine the Great," was performed at the Curtain before his twenty-third year.

The earliest flowering of the English drama, the germs of which must be sought in the rude interludes of Skelton and Heywood, was the "Gorboduc" of Sackville and Newton, which was played before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, about two years anterior to the birth of Marlowe. The production of "Gorboduc" was an important event, partly because it was the first work written in English for scenic representation that deserved the name of a tragedy, but more because it was the first in which the rhyming quatrains, or couplets, of earlier playwrights were supplanted by the new measure, blank verse, which Lord Surrey had discovered more than twenty years before. Professing to deal with history, — for Gorboduc figures in the old chronicles as a king of Britain, — it was followed by a series of more or less historical plays, among which may be mentioned "Appius and Virginia," "Damon and Pythias," "Cambyses," "Marius and Sylla," "The Battle of Alcazar," "Edward I.," "Alphonsus, King of Arragon," and lastly "Tamburlaine the Great." If Marlowe went up to London, as he is supposed to have done, with the expectation of finding a larger field for the exercise of his talents there than at Cambridge, he went at the right time; for never before nor since was the demand for such talents as he possessed so clamorous or so constant. It had been stimulated, if not created, by three or four

men like himself, one being Thomas Nash, who had been his contemporary at Cambridge; another, Robert Greene, also a Cambridge man; and a third, George Peele, who had taken the degree of M.A. at Oxford. They were authors, in that they wrote for their livelihood, and hack-writers, in that they wrote what the stationers wanted. Of the three, Greene was the most popular; for he had a knack of scribbling stories that hit the taste of the time, and he could manufacture a play at a pinch when he had an order for one. They were loose and careless livers, rioting at taverns and ordinaries when a successful play or pamphlet put money in their purses, and skulking in out-of-the-way lodgings when their money was gone. The period was prolific in poets, of whom the most noted were Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, who, besides "Gorboduc," had written the Induction to "The Mirror for Magistrates;" Edmund Spenser, who had written the "Shepherd's Calendar;" William Warner, who had written "Albion's England;" John Lyly, who had written "Euphues," and several court comedies; George Gascoigne, who had written "The Steel Glass," and other poesies; and George Whetstone, who had written "Promos and Cassandra," which was one day to be of use to Shakespeare in writing "Measure for Measure." It was to make his way among poets like these, whose works were no doubt known to him, that Marlowe went up to London; and he made his way at once with "Tamburlaine," greatly to the dissatisfaction of Nash, — who, in his preliminary epistle to Greene's "Menaphon," satirized him and his measure, which he described as the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse, — as well as to the dissatisfaction of Greene himself, whose popularity as a dramatist was suddenly eclipsed. One must be somewhat familiar with Elizabethan poetry before he can fully understand the significance of the dramatic revolution that followed the production of "Tamburlaine." He should at least read "Gorboduc," and two or three of the plays of Peele and Greene, — say, Peele's "Arraignment of Paris," and Greene's "Orlando Furioso," — before he reads "Tamburlaine," which will amply repay him for that dreary preparation, and clearly demonstrate the superior genius of Marlowe. Conscious of his powers, and confident

of himself, he had a greater aptitude for dramatic writing than any of his contemporaries. His impetuous spirit refused to be fettered by rhyme, which he felt was inadequate for dramatic purposes; and, if Surrey had not discovered blank verse, we may be sure that he would have discovered it, for his use of it, all things considered, was the greatest discovery of all. He was the first to divine its capacities, and to develop them heroically. He knew what he was about when he sat down to write "Tamburlaine."

> "From jigging veins of rhyming mother-wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.
> View but his picture in this tragic glass,
> And then applaud his fortunes as you please."

The first part of "Tamburlaine," which was represented, we are assured, before Marlowe had attained his twenty-third year, was speedily succeeded by the second part.

> "The general welcomes Tamburlaine receiv'd,
> When he arrivèd last upon the stage,
> Have made our poet pen his Second Part,
> Where Death cuts off the progress of his pomp,
> And murderous Fates throw all his triumphs down."

"Tamburlaine" was succeeded by "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus," "The Jew of Malta," "Edward the Second," and "The Massacre of Paris." It may interest the reader of this sketch to know that the celebrated actor Edward Allyn, the founder of Dulwich College, played the part of Tamburlaine in a copper-laced coat and red velvet breeches, and the part of Barabas the Jew with a false nose. It would seem, indeed, as Dyce has pointed out, that, on the early English stage, the children of Israel were always furnished with an extra quantity of nose, as if a race so universally hated could hardly be made to appear too ugly. The career of Marlowe was

more illustrious, it seems to me, than that of any other English poet; for no other English poet, so far as I remember, ever surpassed all his contemporaries at so early an age as he, or ever achieved so much distinction by his first work. Other poets, the most eminent, served their apprenticeship in the divine art: from the beginning, Marlowe was a master. That his success was resented, as we are told it was, by Greene and Nash, was natural; for, not to insist upon the jealousy and envy with which the poetic temperament has always been credited, and of which they had, no doubt, their full share, it touched them in that vital part, — the pocket. They had the market to themselves before this young interloper from Cambridge set up a stall of his own, and had his wares preferred to theirs. It was monstrous, sirs, monstrous.

The personal history of Marlowe was probably not worse than the personal history of most of his dramatic contemporaries, — certainly not worse than that of Greene, — but at best it was bad enough. He was dissolute, debauched, profligate, addicted to his cups; a swaggering roisterer, always ready for brawls. But others were as ready as he; and among them was one Francis Archer, with whom he was feasting one summer-day at Deptford, and upon whom, while they were playing at backgammon, he suddenly drew his dagger, intending to stab him in the back. The intention was perceived by Archer, who avoided the blow, and, drawing his own dagger, struck him in the eye, bringing away the brains as he withdrew the weapon. In a few hours he was dead. Such was Christopher Marlowe, who perished in his thirtieth year, the greatest poet of his age, with the exception of William Shakespeare, whose greatness had still to manifest itself. The death of Marlowe was seized upon with avidity by the Puritans, and he was held up as an awful example of the judgment of God. He was a free-thinker, an atheist, a blasphemer; there was no known crime that was not imputed to him. As no one man could have been guilty of all the wickedness he was charged with, and as one of his accusers was afterwards hanged at Tyburn, let us charitably render the Scotch verdict — "Not proven." The Devil himself is not as black as he is painted by the theologians.

The great gift of poetry — the greatest which Heaven has conferred upon mankind, and the one which, if well balanced and wisely exercised, confers the greatest pleasure on mankind — is a dangerous gift to its possessor. It separates him from his fellows, whose pursuits are of material and not spiritual things; and it creates for him a life in which they have no share. A law unto itself, it is lawlessness to them. If we cast our eyes back from the poets of the nineteenth century to the poets of the sixteenth century, — from Swinburne to Marlowe, say, — they will not rest upon many who command respect for what they were, as well as what they wrote; who were men first, and poets afterward. We find, in this small group of immortals, the gracious figure of Shakespeare, the stern figure of Milton, the thoughtful figure of Wordsworth: we do not find Burns there, nor Byron, nor Shelley. Many of the errors with which the personal history of the English poets is stained were, no doubt, temperamental; others appear to have been hereditary: but the greater number, I fear, were sheer wilfulness. The consciousness of great powers is a misfortune to all but the greatest minds, for these alone distinguish between their use and abuse.

"Oh! it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant."

Power for power's sake is not poetry. Byron never learned this truth; but the young Keats — the manikin whom he wished somebody would flay alive — knew it instinctively. Hear him: —

"A drainless shower
Of light is poesy: 'tis the supreme of power;
'Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm;
The very archings of her eyelids charm
A thousand willing agents to obey;
And still she governs with the mildest sway:
But strength alone, though of the Muses born,
Is like a fallen angel; trees uptorn,
Darkness and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres,
Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs

> And thorns of life; forgetting the great end
> Of poesy, — that it should be a friend
> To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts, of man."

As we define poetry, which is not to be defined, so we divide the poets into schools, which, strictly speaking, are not schools. The poetry of different periods is marked by certain characteristics, which are strong in some poets and weak in others, and which suggest other characteristics that have not yet manifested themselves. What most impresses me in the poetry of Marlowe, — a feeling of prodigality, a sense of daring, the splendor of a fiery spirit, — I find in no poet since, save in Algernon Charles Swinburne. I find great qualities in the old dramatists, — in Kyd, in Chapman, in Tourneur, in Ford, in Webster, — strange passions, strong situations, the terror and the pathos of tragedy; but, with the exception of the scenes of Webster, they are not the body of their work, but rather the light that is flashed upon it, and the darkness in which that light is suddenly swallowed up. When we have left the great race of the old dramatists, — of whom Shirley, Lamb says, was the last, — we have left the glory and the greatness of English verse. We are among clever men, — satirists and wits, like Dryden and Pope and their followers, writers of natural description like Thomson, writers of pastorals and elegies, like Shenstone and Lyttleton; but we are not among poets, — not among the makers. There is that in Collins and Gray which commands our admiration; in Cowper, which commands our respect; in Burns, which commands our love, — which ripples in smiles, and melts in the mist of tears. But the fervor, the force, the elemental energy of the old masters, is not theirs. They are fettered by poetic traditions. These traditions were loosened by Wordsworth and Coleridge, who quickened the materiality of their predecessors by the injection of their own personality, which they mistook for philosophy; and by Scott, who discovered the metrical romance in balladry, or recovered it from this balladry, wherein, like the famous old German emperor, it had long slumbered, hearkening in dreams for the striking of the hour that was to awaken it. The fetters were loosened, but not broken, until Byron and Shelley rose in their young might, and indig-

nantly rent them asunder, restoring to song its ancient kingdom, and to man his freedom of mind. One has not to read far in Byron and Shelley, before he feels that a new force is at work in English verse, and the determination of this feeling in himself is the determination of his intellectual condition. If he believes in the old order of things, it is a destructive force, and he condemns it: if he believes in a new order of things, it is a reconstructive force, and he applauds it. But whatever he believes, he recognizes the force. It is directed, in the poetry of Byron, against society and politics; in the poetry of Shelley, against society, politics, and religion. One struck at the State, the other at the State and the Church. Of course their poetry was informed with other elements than those that are implied in this brief statement, for they were poets as well as revolutionists, — creators as well as destroyers; but in the main it was what I have indicated, — a fearless, resolute warfare with whatever men worshipped and feared. It is not ended yet, but it will be one day.

> "For freedom's battle, once begun,
> Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won."

There have been no sudden makings of splendid names in England since the creator of "Childe Harold" woke up one morning, and found himself famous; but there have since been mornings there when other creators have woke up, and found themselves not undistinguished. It was not so difficult to startle the readers of English verse in the second decade of the century as in the seventh; for, whatever we may think of the poets of the former, it is certain they had not taken so strong a hold on their contemporaries as the poets of the latter, who had attained an excellence not before dreamed of, and who appeared to occupy every kingdom and province of song. The glory of Scott was the last red tints of a setting sun, and the glory of Wordsworth the first mild radiance of a rising moon, when Byron came like a comet, and paled their ineffectual fires. It was neither moonrise nor sunset when Swinburne came, but the full splendor of noontide, — the noontide of which the genius of Tennyson was

he golden light, and the genius of Browning the concourse of circum-
ambient clouds. Between the fleeting shadow of these clouds and
he girdling spaces of sunshine he stepped forth, — a slight figure in
he garments of the Greek priesthood, — youthful but for the grave,
ar-off look in his eyes, and passionate but for the cold severity of his
nien. Young priest of an old religion, he rekindled the fire upon
ts antique altar, and restored the worship of its imperious gods.
Such was the coming of Swinburne with "Atalanta in Calydon." Re-
garded reverently at all times by the few poets who were scholars, the
tudy of Greek poetry was productive of but little in England after
Chapman finished his translation of Homer. Other translations of
esser Greek poets followed, and other translations of Homer, the
hiefest being the heroic version of Pope, — which the great critic
Bentley admitted to be a pretty poem, though it was not Homer, —
nd the blank-verse rendering of Cowper, which was more faithful and
ess readable. The genius of Greek poetry was alien to the English
nind until it revealed itself to the young imagination of Keats, who
vore it in his heart of hearts, not because he was a scholar, — for a
cholar he was not, — but because he was a Greek. There are a thou-
and faults in "Endymion," but the unpardonable fault of falsehood
s not one of them. It is true, everywhere true to the spirit of Greek
astoral poetry, of which it was the first, and is the last, example in
English song. How thoroughly the genius of Keats was possessed
vith the beautiful mythology of Greece, and how rapidly it matured
is wonderful genius, which in writing "Endymion" outgrew the lush
uxuriance of manner which is the worst defect of that poem, we see
n his Odes "To Psyche," and "On a Grecian Urn," — exquisite pro-
uctions in the purest style of art, — and in the fragment of "Hype-
ion," wherein magnificence of conception and severity of expression
re alike conspicuous, and where, for the first time, the epical height
f the Greeks is attained by an English poet. The secret of "Hype-
on" and "Endymion" inhered in the temperament of Keats, who
vas a Greek, as one of his friends declared. The secret of "Ata-
nta in Calydon" was an outcome of the scholarship of Swinburne;
or only a scholar, and a ripe one, — a Grecian as distinguished from

a Greek, — could have written that noble tragedy. It demanded more than the affluent sympathy of Keats: it demanded a fulness of knowledge which was denied him, — knowledge of the intention which was the inspiration of Greek tragedy, of the laws by which it was governed, and of the end to which it was directed, and which was to awaken by the simplest means emotions of pity and terror. If the inspiration of "Atalanta in Calydon" could have been drawn from any source other than the scholarship of Swinburne, I do not know where to look for it among the writings of his contemporaries or predecessors. He must have admired the Hellenics of Landor, who, like himself, was a Greek, though of a different type; but a profounder feeling than admiration for those noble productions, the spirit of which is idyllic rather than dramatic, was exercised in the shaping of his tragedy. He was charmed, no doubt, with Tennyson's "Ulysses," the repose of which is suggestive of the descriptive passages in Greek tragedy, and also, no doubt, with Browning's "Artemis Prologuizes," the art of which is of a sterner cast; but neither could have discovered his genius for him, or directed him in the path he had chosen. He could not have been helped by Arnold's "Empedocles on Ætna," still less by his tragedy of "Merope."

What Marlowe's "Tamburlaine the Great" was in our dramatic literature, of which it was the first ripe flower, the first triumphant voice, — such was Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon." There was nothing like it in English verse before it appeared, and there has been nothing like it since. It was the first and last awakening of the tragic Muse of Greece, — a stern, magnificent, awful spirit, speaking the large language of the gods, and moving to her end like Fate. The qualities by which the blank verse of Marlowe is distinguished — the strength which impelled his contemporaries to call it a "mighty line," its daring use, not to say abuse, of language, and its wild, stormy music — are conspicuous in "Atalanta in Calydon." The originality of Swinburne's blank verse is as absolute as the originality of Marlowe's blank verse. It is an instrument upon which he was the first to play, and whose volume of sound no hand save his could evoke and control. One needs to be a poet in order to comprehend

the difficulties it overcomes, and the triumphs it achieves, — the art, in short, of which it is so magnificent an example. But one need not be a poet in order to feel its solemnity, its grandeur, its greatness, and the weight of the stern, dark thought with which it is charged. And one need not be a poet to feel that he never before encountered such an opulence of diction, such a wealth of words, such a largess of language, as Swinburne showers upon his song. And it is not merely language, of which there is a sufficiency in the poetry of the period, which is rather employed in the coining of phrases than of thoughts: it is the best, the strongest, the most poetic, with which the vocabulary of any modern poet was ever enriched. It is a royal treasure-house, the resources of which are incalculable and inexhaustible. Another quality to be noted in Swinburne, and one which allies him to the masters, is his sense of rhythm, — the music which is the inspiration and creation of metrical thought, and in which it lives, moves, and has its being. We find it in the great works of Shakespeare, and in his songs: in the early poems of Milton, — the songs in "Comus," and passages in "Paradise Lost;" and occasionally in Beaumont and Fletcher. We do not find it in Dryden and Pope, or, to come to our own time, in Scott or Byron. They knew nothing of the unheard melodies of which Keats tells us, but played, with their pipes or their trumpets, the old tunes which had been handed down to them, and from which such life as they may once have had had long since departed. It was otherwise with Swinburne, whose sense of music was profound, and who had, besides, an ear of his own which taught him, that, much as the masters had accomplished, they had not discovered all the secrets of English verse, particularly the great secret which underlies all great poetry, — the compulsion of discords into harmonies. The combinations of sound which run so strangely through Swinburne's poetry, and which cannot but end, one would think, in the harshest discords, become, in his hands, rivers of sonorous music, which rush and roar along their several ways until they reach the sea, and are swallowed up in its long, tumultuous, endless harmony.

When the history of English verse in the nineteenth century comes to be written, Swinburne will certainly figure in one chapter, and as

prominently as any of his contemporaries or predecessors. This chapter will be devoted to the poetic drama, which will be considered — which cannot fail to be considered — a sorry survival of the poetic drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will contain the great names of Byron, and Coleridge, and Shelley, and Browning, and Tennyson, and the lesser names of Maturin, and Milman, and Knowles, and Talfourd, and Bulwer; but it will contain no great works, unless the historian of the future shall persuade himself that "Pippa Passes," and "Colombe's Birthday," and "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon" are such. There were great possibilities in Beddoes, who conceived dramatic situations as strong as those of Webster; but unfortunately they mastered him before he could master them, and so remained suggestions, — fragments, —

"Like the red outline of beginning Adam."

There are two intellectual movements in this century, which are detrimental to, if they are not destructive of, the poetic drama. The first, the creative movement, which two centuries ago was exercised in the poetic drama, is now exercised in the prose novel; the second, the poetic movement, which was then exercised in a general lyrical exaltation, is now exercised in the narrow province of personality. Men who, in the days of Shakespeare, would have written plays, in our day have written novels; and other men, who, in those days, would at least have tried to write plays, are content in ours to write productions which they hope will pass muster as plays on account of the pretty personal poetry with which they are so lavishly bestrewn! Two gifts are indispensable to the dramatic poet: one is the power of forgetting himself, the other the power of remembering his characters. But these gifts have not been bestowed upon the poets of our time, who are always remembering themselves, and always forgetting their characters, and consequently are not dramatic poets. Swinburne occupies a prominent place among the crowd of contributors to the poetic drama of the nineteenth century, and occupies it justly, as it seems to me. There is nothing in the whole range of the English drama with which his trilogy of plays of which Mary, Queen of Scots,

is the heroine, can be compared; and whether one likes it or not, it is certainly a remarkable work. It is remarkable for the skill with which he has delineated the character and passions of that strange woman, — siren of hearts, who clung to the hearts she broke, loving the love if not the lover; angel of light and darkness, and beautiful in both, — and it is remarkable for its length, which exceeds that of any dramatic work in the language, as the length of "The Ring and the Book" exceeds that of any narrative poem. It is an epical tragedy.

Every thing that Swinburne has written is stamped with his individuality, — a confident and wilful originality, which is at once the source of his strength and his weakness. He held it in check when he wrote "Atalanta in Calydon;" but when he wrote his "Poems and Ballads," it ran away with him, and he has never succeeded in mastering it since. He was poet enough and critic enough to know that "Poems and Ballads" would provoke censure. The world may be mistaken in many things, but it is not likely to be mistaken in so simple a thing as its own sense of morality. It knows — we all know — that we are not living in a state of nature. We have outlived its liberty, its wild will, its strong instincts, — the license of its thoughts and manners. We outlived all those before the first poet sang, and we will not let the last poet recall them. There is no poetry in them, there is not art in them: they are bad poetry, they are bad art, and, worse than all, they are hideously immoral. Some such feeling as this startled the countrymen of Swinburne in "Poems and Ballads." Purblind to many things, there is no limit to their vision when their eyes are once open. They saw nothing objectionable in the scene between Sebald and Ottima in "Pippa Passes," which they had been reading for twenty years; and nothing objectionable in "Chastelard," which they were then reading. But "Poems and Ballads" shocked them into one of those sudden spasms of virtuous indignation to which they are subject; and they straightway proceeded to magnify the poet's offences. They explained his veiled allusions, and dragged his hidden meanings to light. What an ordinary reader would not have understood, they compelled him to understand, committing in their criticism the very fault that Swinburne committed in his poetry.

What went to the genesis of these poems is a literary or personal secret which it will behoove the biographers of Swinburne to discover. He may have written them as so many dramatic studies, or he may have written them as so many expressions of himself. But for whatever purpose they may have been written, they did not and could not have come from a healthy mind: they are morbid, feverous, diseased, — sick unto death with the awful sickness of the soul. It was in his genius to write them, and live; but not to regain the health, the strength, the sanity, that were his when he wrote "Atalanta in Calydon."

It is the fortune, or the misfortune, of Swinburne, that he has not been criticised: he has been praised and abused, but criticised never. He was accepted at once, as he should have been; but he was not questioned, when he should have been questioned over and over. His intentions have not been examined, nor his methods scrutinized. He may be one of the masters of song, or he may be only one of its scholars: we have to judge for ourselves which he is. I have read, I believe, all that he has written, — with admiration for much, which I feel is very fine; with regret for more, which I know is very faulty. He has great poetic gifts, but he is not a great poet; for no man can be a great poet who is not a wise and solid thinker, and whose language is not large and direct.

I made a careful study of Swinburne's genius a year or two ago, taking for my text his only attempt at a narrative poem, "Tristram of Lyonesse;" and, as what I wrote then expresses what I think now, I shall repeat the substance of it here. I began by saying that it was a little curious, in view of the tendency of the modern English mind towards literary studies, that no one had yet made a study of his genius and his method of working, both of which were remarkable, and remarkably faulty. They were faulty, I said; for measured by the large methods of the great English poets, and the scope and style of their work, his work was exceedingly narrow, and his method merely a manner. He has published a dozen or more volumes of verse; but he has written no line that lingers in the memory, and has uttered nothing that resembles a thought. This could not have been the

case if he had been gifted with unusual mental endowments; for many a lesser poet has occasionally thought to some purpose, and has written verses that are remembered. One of his defects, perhaps his prime defect, is the brilliancy and force of his vocabulary. No poet ever excelled him in the profusion with which he throws off rich and picturesque and spirited words: he is a perfect master of epithets. His pages are luminous mists of language, the exact meaning of which, and their bearing upon the matter in hand, it is generally difficult to discover, they are so bravely put forth, and with such sonorous pomps of sound. For his music is never less, but often more, than his sense. He is a wonderful musician, if nothing else. He appears to have a great command of words; but when one looks into his manner carefully, one is struck with the really small number at his command, or, to state it more critically, with the rapidity with which the same words are perpetually turning up, and the little they really signify. The effects of brightness, for example, are indicated five times in the first nine lines of "Tristram of Lyonesse," and are scattered bewilderingly throughout the whole poem. Every thing is suggestive of imagery; but when one attempts to grasp the imagery it proves a *fata morgana*, which disappears, flitting from page to page and resting nowhere. He abounds with allusions to the great objects of nature, the sky and the sun, and day and night; but he never brings them before us as we are accustomed to see them, — for the simple reason, perhaps, that he has never seen them as they are, but as they seem to him through the haze of what he would call his imagination. The world as it flashes and glimmers in his lines is a very different world from the spot which men call earth; obeying other planetary conditions than that, and exhibiting a flora and fauna of startling novelty. The qualities I mentioned were as evident, I said, in Swinburne's early work as in his latest, though they were not so abundant there, nor of such permanent significance. There was a time when he might have overcome them, or at least have put them under the restraint of his critical powers; but, unfortunately, that time is past, for what at first was a tentative manner has now become a determined vice, which mars all his intellectual efforts. It is due to him to say

that it did not originate with him, but that it belongs in a measure to the poetic history of the period, and that it embodies the romanticism of Victor Hugo, in an English form. It runs through the first poems of William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, which preceded his, although Rossetti's first book was not published until five or six years after "Atalanta in Calydon;" and it is the *motif* of all the young English poets of the day, who are nothing if not romantic. The romantic poet is a gentleman, often a very young gentleman, who is wiser than the poets who lived before him, and against whom he protests, by his choice of subjects, and his manner of handling them. The difference between him and the masters is that they had something to say, and said it, and that he has nothing to say, and says it with an abundance of words. What the romantic poet chiefly protests against is the general intelligibility, the common-sense, of all the dead-and-gone English poets, — as strongly against Shakespeare and Milton, as against Byron and Scott, whose æsthetic misfortune it is that we can understand them. Each from his own point of view, and by the light that was in him and his time, looked into his heart and mind, and at the world of nature and men in which he found himself, and painted what he saw and felt, in imperishable colors. To mention these great names, is to think of a long procession of immortal figures, and to remember great thoughts that authenticate themselves. In a large sense, their work is Matthew Arnold's "criticism of life." Of what is Rossetti's work, or Morris's work, or Swinburne's work a criticism? As likely as not, of an exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery; for they are inspired by insignificant pictures as often as by great actions, and are never more themselves than when, emulating their favorite painters, they are piling up rich words that bear the same relation to poetry that the colors mixed on a palette do to finished pictures. Scott and Byron have hitherto been ranked among the romantic poets of England; but compared with this later brood of singers they are classical poets, for they are simple, direct, and manly. When Scott had a poetic story to tell, he told it, as in "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake;" when Byron had a poetic story to tell, he told it, as in "The Corsair," "The Giaour," and "Parisina." Even Keats, a more poetic poet than

either, was a masterly story-teller in his "Eve of St. Agnes," and "Lamia." A story in poetry differs from a story in prose only in the sense that poetry differs from prose; that is to say, it is more ideal in conception, and more impassioned in expression: in other respects it is governed by the same laws of composition, in that it concerns itself with feelings and actions which are within the range of human experience and sympathy; that it proceeds from the beginning to the end by steps which can be traced, and which are in the direction of a natural development of the subject; and that, when finished, it is its own excuse for being. No poetic story has ever impressed mankind without fulfilling these conditions, and without being intelligible to mankind in one hemisphere as well as another, and to-day as surely as thousands of years ago. The Greek Homer, the Roman Virgil, the English Shakespeare, were more than a Greek, a Roman, or an Englishman: they were monarchs of the world, who claimed and secured by their prevision and greatness the admiration of future ages. It would be unjust to compare Swinburne with those famous story-tellers; but we have a right to compare him with their successors in that delightful art,—such lesser poets as Spenser, and Marlowe, and Scott, and Byron, and Keats, who knew what went to the making of poetic stories, and knew how to narrate them poetically. There is no better model in English, of a pure narrative poem, than "Hero and Leander," Marlowe's share of which was finished before the summer of 1593; and there is no worse model than Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse." It lacks every thing that a narrative poem should possess. It is obscure and tedious, to begin with: for, given a knowledge of the mediæval legend with which it professes to deal, it is with the greatest difficulty that we can follow Swinburne in his handling of its incidents; and, when we think we have followed him correctly for a page or two, we are suddenly bewildered into doubt by his extraordinary prestidigitation of persons, and places, and effects. We see nothing distinctly, in spite of the long descriptions with which his poem abounds; and if we have more than a confused guess at what he is trying to say, we are lucky indeed. If he has a meaning, he is generally prevented from reaching it by the blooming inexactness of his

vocabulary, which resembles nothing so much as the luxuriance of a tropical forest. The same defect marked the tentative career of Keats, while he was writing "Endymion," the sense of which often depends upon the good or bad luck of the poet in finding the necessary rhyme; but Keats outgrew this defect so rapidly, that, in little more than a year after the completion of "Endymion," he began "Hyperion." Swinburne wanders as aimlessly in "Tristram of Lyonesse" as if he had selected "Endymion" as a model, — a model that he has fallen short of, in that he nowhere reproduces that exquisite sense of poetic luxury, and that trembling sensitiveness to beauty, which are vital in all that Keats wrote, — even in the bits of doggerel which croon out brokenly in his careless letters. What he probably had before him in writing "Tristram of Lyonesse," or what he read before he sat down to write it, was "Lamia," the music of whose heroic lines, as varied and strengthened by occasional triplets and alexandrines, appears to have impressed him; but not powerfully, for he remembered it only at long intervals, and then merely as an effect which it might be well to try again, and in rapid succession. What Dryden and Keats intended and accomplished by these departures from the laws of the heroic couplet, he seems never to have perceived.

But enough of "Tristram of Lyonesse," which I have not reprinted, out of consideration for the readers of this volume, whose poetic patience I had no right to burden; and enough — more than enough — of criticism of Swinburne. What I set out to do was to select what was best in his poetry; and, as this seemed to lie in three directions, I followed them carefully, — first in the narrow province of Greek tragedy, next in the broad world of the English drama, and last in the enchanted region of romantic verse. If I have done what I sought to do, I have honored the genius of Algernon Charles Swinburne.

R. H. STODDARD.

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ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I NOW DEDICATE, WITH EQUAL AFFECTION, REVERENCE, AND REGRET,
A POEM INSCRIBED TO HIM WHILE YET ALIVE IN WORDS WHICH ARE NOW RETAINED
BECAUSE THEY WERE LAID BEFORE HIM;
AND TO WHICH, RATHER THAN CANCEL THEM, I HAVE ADDED SUCH OTHERS AS WERE EVOKED
BY THE NEWS OF HIS DEATH:
THAT THOUGH LOSING THE PLEASURE I MAY NOT LOSE THE HONOR OF INSCRIBING
IN FRONT OF MY WORK
THE HIGHEST OF CONTEMPORARY NAMES.

ᾤχεο δὴ Βορέηθεν ἀπότροπος ἀλλά σε Νύμφαι
ἤγαγον ἀσπασίαν ἠδύπνοοι καθ' ἅλα,
πληροῦσαι μέλιτος θεόθεν στόμα, μή τι Ποσειδῶν
βλάψῃ, ἐν ὠσὶν ἔχων σὴν μελίγηρυν ὄπα,
τοῖος ἀοιδὸς ἔφυς· ἡμεῖς δ' ἔτι κλαίομεν, οἱ σου
ὀευόμεθ' οἰχομένου, καί σε ποθοῦμεν ἀεί.
εἶπε δὲ Πιερίδων τις ἀναστρεφθεῖσα πρὸς ἄλλην·
ἦλθεν, ἰδού, πάντων φίλτατος ἦλθε βροτῶν,
στέμματα δρεψάμενος νεοθηλέα χερσὶ γεραιαῖς,
καὶ πολιὸν δάφναις ἀμφεκάλυψε κάρη·
ἡδύ τι Σικελικαῖς ἐπὶ πηκτίσιν, ἡδύ τι χόρδαις,
ᾄσόμενος· πολλὴν γὰρ μετέβαλλε λύραν,
πολλάκι δ' ἐν βήσσαισι καθήμενον εὗρεν Ἀπόλλων,
ἄνθεσι δ' ἔστεψεν, τερπνὰ δ' ἔδωκε λέγειν,
Πᾶνά τ' ἀείμνηστόν τε Πίτυν Κόρυθόν τε δύσεδρον,
ἣν τ' ἐφίλησε θεὰν θνητὸς Ἀμαδρυάδα·
πόντου δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκοίμισε Κυμοδάμειαν,
τήν τ' Ἀγαμεμνονίαν παῖδ' ἀπέδωκε πατρὶ,
πρὸς δ' ἱεροὺς Δελφοὺς θεόπληκτον ἔπεμψεν Ὀρέστην
τειρόμενον στυγεραῖς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα θεαῖς.

ᾤχεο δὴ καὶ ἄνευθε φίλων καὶ ἄνευθεν ἀοιδῆς.
δρεψόμενος μαλακῆς ἀνθεα Περσεφόνης.
ᾤχεο· κούκ ἔτ' ἔσει, κούκ αὖ ποτέ σοι παρεδοῦμαι
ἀζόμενος, χειρῶν χερσὶ θιγὼν ὁσίαις·
νῦν δ' αὖ μνησάμενον γλυκύπικρος ὑπήλυθεν αἰδὼς,
οἷα τυχὼν οἷου πρὸς σέθεν οἷος ἔχω·
οὔποτε σοῖς, γέρον, ὄμμα φίλοις φίλον ὄμμασι τέρψω,
σῆς, γέρον, ἀψάμενος, φίλτατε, δεξιτερᾶς
ἢ ψαφαρὰ κόνις, ἢ ψαφαρὸς βιός ἐστι· τὶ τούτων
μεῖον ἐφημερίων; οὐ κόνις ἀλλὰ βίος.
ἀλλά μοι ἠδύτερός γε πέλεις πολὺ τῶν ἔτ' ἐόντων,
ἔπλεο γάρ· σοὶ μὴν ταῦτα θανόντι φέρω,
παῖρα μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κῆρος ἐτήτυμα· μηδ' ἀποτρεφθῇς,
πρὸς δὲ βαλὼν ἔτι νῦν ἤσυχον ὄμμα δέχου.
οὐ γὰρ ἔχω, μέγα δή τι θέλων, σέθεν ἄξια δοῦναι
θαπτομένου περ ἀπών· οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν ἔμοι·
οὐδε μελικρήτου παρέχειν γάνος· εἰ γὰρ ἐνείη
καί σε χεροὶν ψαύσαι καί σέ ποτ' αὖθις ἰδεῖν,
δάκρυσί τε σπονδαὶς τε κάρα φίλον ἀμφιπολεύειν
ὀφθαλμούς θ' ἱεροὺς σοὺς ἱερόν τε δέμας.
εἶθ' ὄφελον· μάλα γὰρ τάδ' ἂν ἀμπαύσειε μερίμνης·
νῦν δὲ πρόσωθεν ἄνευ σήματος οἰκτον ἄγω·
οὐδ' ἐπιτυμβίδιον θρηνὼ μέλος, ἀλλ' ἀπαμυνθεὶς,
ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθεν ἔχων ἀμφιδακρυτὰ πάθη.
ἀλλὰ σὺ χαῖρε θανὼν, καὶ ἔχων γέρας ἴσθι πρὸς ἀνδρῶν
πρός τε θεῶν, ἐνέροις εἴ τις ἔπεστι θεός.
χαῖρε γέρον, φίλε χαῖρε πατὲρ, πολὺ φέρτατ' ἀοιδῶν
ὧν ἴδομεν, πολὺ δὴ φέρτατ' ἀεισομένων·
χαῖρε, καὶ ὄλβον ἔχοις, οἷόν γε θανόντες ἔχουσιν,
ἡσυχίαν ἔχθρας καὶ φιλότητος ἄτερ.

σήματος οἰχομένου σοι μνήματ' ἐς ὕστερον ἔσται,
σοί τε φίλῃ μνήμη μνήματος οἰχομένου·
ὃν Χάριτες κλαίουσι θεαί, κλαίει δ' Ἀφροδίτη
καλλιχόροις Μουσῶν τερψαμένη στεφάνοις
οὐ γὰρ ἄπαξ ἱερούς ποτε γῆρας ἔτριψεν ἀοιδούς·
τήνδε τὸ σὸν φαίνει μνῆμα τόδ' ἀγλαΐαν.
ἦ φίλος ἦς μακάρεσσι βροτὸς, σοὶ δ' εἴ τινι Νύμφαι
δῶρα ποθεινὰ νέμειν, ὕστατα δῶρ', ἔδοσαν.
τὰς νῦν χάλκεος ὕπνος ἔβη καὶ ἀνήνεμος αἰὼν,
καὶ συνθαπτομέναι μοῖραν ἔχουσι μίαν.
εὕδεις καὶ σὺ, καλὸν καὶ ἀγάκλυτον ἐν χθονὶ κοίλῃ
ὕπνον ἐφικόμενος, σῆς ἀπύνοσφι πάτρας,
τῆλε παρὰ ξανθοῦ Τυρσηνικὸν οἶδμα καθεύδεις
νάματος, ἡ δ' ἔτι σὴ μαῖά σε γαῖα ποθεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἀπέχεις, καὶ πρόσθε φιλόπτολις ὢν περ ἀπείπας·
εὕδε· μάκαρ δ' ἡμῖν οὐδ' ἀμέγαρτος ἔσει.
βαιὸς ἐπιχθονίων γε χρόνος καὶ μοῖρα κρατήσει,
τοὺς δέ ποτ' εὐφροσύνη τοὺς δέ ποτ' ἄλγος ἔχει·
πολλάκι δ' ἠ βλάπτει φάος ἠ σκότος ἀμφικαλύπτει
μυρομένους, δάκνει δ' ὕπνος ἐγρηγορότας·
οὐδ' ἔθ' ὅτ' ἐν τύμβοισι κατέδραθεν ὄμμα θανόντων
ἢ σκότος ἤ τι φάος δήξεται ἠελίου·
οὐδ' ὄναρ ἐνύχιον καὶ ἐνύπνιον οὐδ' ὕπαρ ἔσται
ἢ ποτε τερπομένοις ἤ ποτ' ὀδυρομένοις·
ἀλλ' ἕνα πάντες ἀεὶ θᾶκον συνέχουσι καὶ ἕδραν
ἀντὶ βροτῆς ἀβροτον, κάλλιμον ἀντι κακῆς.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON.

THE PERSONS.

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.
CHORUS.
ALTHÆA.
MELEAGER.
ŒNEUS.
ATALANTA.
TOXEUS.
PLEXIPPUS.
HERALD.
MESSENGER.
SECOND MESSENGER.

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οὐχ ὑπόπτερος
φροντίσιν δαείς.
τὰν ἁ παιδολύμας τάλαινα Θεστιὰς μήσατο
πυρδαῆ τινα πρόνοιαν,
καταίθουσα παιδὸς δαφοινὸν

δαλὸν ἥλικ' ἐπεὶ μολὼν
ματρόθεν κελάδησε
σύμμετρόν τε διαὶ βίου
μοιρόκραντον ἐς ἅμαρ.

ÆSCH. Cho. 602-612.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning. And, upon his birth, came the three Fates, and prophesied of him three things, namely these: that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed; wherefore his mother plucked it forth, and kept it by her. And the child, being a man grown, sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and, when the tribes of the North and West made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army, and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against Œneus king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honor, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar which slew many and wasted all their increase, but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin; for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favored the maiden greatly: and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamoured of her; but the brethren of Althæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labor, laid wait for her to take away her spoil; but Meleager fought against them, and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister beheld, and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and, taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

Chief Huntsman. Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,
Goddess whom all gods love with threefold heart,
Being treble in thy divided deity,
A light for dead men and dark hours, a foot
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
To all things fierce and fleet that roar and range

Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or sleep;
Hear now and help and lift no violent hand,
But favorable and fair as thine eye's beam
Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all night
Amid the king's hounds and the hunting men
Have wrought and worshipped toward thee; nor shall man
See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of spears;
But for the end, that lies unreached at yet
Between the hands and on the knees of gods.
O fair-faced sun killing the stars and dews
And dreams and desolation of the night!
Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow
Touch the most dimmest height of trembling heaven,
And burn and break the dark about thy ways,
Shot through and through with arrows; let thine hair
Lighten as flame above that flameless shell
Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill the world
And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth
Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy feet
Through all the roar and ripple of streaming springs
And foam in reddening flakes and flying flowers
Shaken from hands and blown from lips of nymphs
Whose hair or breast divides the wandering wave
With salt close tresses cleaving lock to lock,
All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed snow;
And all the winds about thee with their wings,
And fountain-heads of all the watered world;
Each horn of Acheloüs, and the green
Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
For in fair time thou comest; come also thou,
Twin-born with him, and virgin, Artemis,
And give our spears their spoil, the wild boar's hide,
Sent in thine anger against us for sin done
And bloodless altars without wine or fire.
Him now consume thou; for thy sacrifice
With sanguine-shining steam divides the dawn,
And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
Fair as the snow and footed as the wind,
From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus
Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
Hast thou drawn hither, and many an armèd king,
Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.
Moreover out of all the Ætolian land,
From the full-flowered Lelantian pasturage
To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Won from the roaring river and laboring sea
When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled
And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords,
Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,
These virgins with the lightening of the day
Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,
Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers,
Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time
Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed,
And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand.

Chorus. When the hounds of spring
are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or
plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of
rain;
And the brown bright nightingale am-
orous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign
faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with empty-
ing of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many riv-
ers,
With a clamor of waters, and with
might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most
fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy
feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan
west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the
feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we
sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and
cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and
could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams
that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto
her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-
player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling
to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-
wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and
sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that
wins;
And time remembered is grief forgot-
ten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begot-
ten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring be-
gins.

The full streams feed on flower of
rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling
foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young
year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to
fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and
fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-
root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by
night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with
delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees di-
vide,
And screen from seeing and leave in
sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves
bare
Her bright breast shortening into
sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of
its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that
scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that
flies.
Althæa. What do ye singing? what
is this ye sing?
Chorus. Flowers bring we, and pure
lips that please the gods,

And raiment meet for service: lest the day
Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.
Althæa. Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day,
Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;
Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?
And though the spring put back a little while
Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,
And the iron time of cursing, yet I know
Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm
Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.
I marvel what men do with prayers awake
Who dream and die with dreaming; any god,
Yea the least god of all things called divine,
Is more than sleep and waking; yet we say,
Perchance by praying a man shall match his god.
For if sleep have no mercy, and man's dreams
Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,
What shall this man do waking? By the gods,
He shall not pray to dream sweet things to-night,
Having dreamt once more bitter things than death.
Chorus. Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine heart?
For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.
Althæa. Look, ye say well, and know not what ye say;
For all my sleep is turned into a fire,
And all my dreams to stuff that kindles it.
Chorus. Yet one doth well being patient of the gods.
Althæa. Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.
Chorus. But when time spreads find out some herb for it.
Althæa. And with their healing herbs infect our blood.
Chorus. What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?
Althæa. What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?
Chorus. They have their will; much talking mends it not.
Althæa. And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?
Chorus. Have they not given life, and the end of life?
Althæa. Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus they do,
They mock us with a little piteousness,
And we say prayers, and weep; but at the last,
Sparing a while, they smite and spare no whit.
Chorus. Small praise man gets dispraising the high gods:
What have they done that thou dishonorest them?
Althæa. First Artemis for all this harried land
I praise not, and for wasting of the boar
That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery feet
Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn
And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,
Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass,
I praise her not; what things are these to praise?
Chorus. But when the king did sacrifice, and gave
Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and wine,
Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering
Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake;
Wherefore being wroth she plagued the land; but now
Takes off from us fate and her heavy things.
Which deed of these twain were not good to praise?

For a just deed looks always either way
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no fault.
Althæa. Yea, but a curse she hath sent above all these
To hurt us where she healed us; and hath lit
Fire where the old fire went out, and where the wind
Slackened, hath blown on us with deadlier air.
Chorus. What storm is this that tightens all our sail?
Althæa. Love, a thwart sea-wind full of rain and foam.
Chorus. Whence blown, and born under what stormier star?
Althæa. Southward across Euenus from the sea.
Chorus. Thy speech turns toward Arcadia like blown wind.
Althæa. Sharp as the north sets when the snows are out.
Chorus. Nay, for this maiden hath no touch of love.
Althæa. I would she had sought in some cold gulf of sea
Love, or in dens where strange beasts lurk, or fire,
Or snows on the extreme hills, or iron land
Where no spring is; I would she had sought therein
And found, or ever love had found her here.
Chorus. She is holier than all holy days or things,
The sprinkled water or fume of perfect fire;
Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and filled
With higher thoughts than heaven; a maiden clean,
Pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and man
She loves not; what should one such do with love?
Althæa. Look you, I speak not as one light of wit,
But as a queen speaks, being heart-vexed; for oft
I hear my brothers wrangling in mid hall,
And am not moved; and my son chiding them,
And these things nowise move me, but I know
Foolish and wise men must be to the end,
And feed myself with patience; but this most,
This moves me, that for wise men as for fools
Love is one thing, an evil thing, and turns
Choice words and wisdom into fire and air.
And in the end shall no joy come, but grief,
Sharp words and soul's division and fresh tears
Flower-wise upon the old root of tears brought forth,
Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears sprung up,
Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain.
These things are in my presage, and myself
Am part of them and know not; but in dreams
The gods are heavy on me, and all the fates
Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with night,
And burn me blind, and disilluminate
My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous soul
Darken with vision; seeing I see not, hear
And hearing am not holpen, but mine eyes
Stain many tender broideries in the bed
Drawn up about my face that I may weep
And the king wake not; and my brows and lips
Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift flames
That tremble, or water when it sobs with heat
Kindled from under; and my tears fill my breast
And speck the fair dyed pillows round the king
With barren showers and salter than the sea,

Such dreams divide me dreaming; for long since
I dreamed that out of this my womb had sprung
Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my son,
Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of fight,
Felt the light touch him coming forth, and wailed
Childlike; but yet he was not; and in time
I bare him, and my heart was great; for yet
So royally was never strong man born,
Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a thing
As this my son was: such a birth God sent
And such a grace to bear it. Then came in
Three weaving women, and span each a thread,
Saying This for strength and That for luck, and one
Saying Till the brand upon the hearth burn down,
So long shall this man see good days and live.
And I with gathered raiment from the bed
Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and cast on it
Water, and trod the flame bare-foot, and crushed
With naked hand spark beaten out of spark
And blew against and quenched it; for I said,
These are the most high Fates that dwell with us,
And we find favor a little in their sight,
A little, and more we miss of, and much time
Foils us; howbeit they have pitied me, O son,
And thee most piteous, thee a tenderer thing
Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.
Wherefore I kissed and hid him with my hands,
And covered under arms and hair, and wept,
And feared to touch him with my tears, and laughed;
So light a thing was this man, grown so great
Men cast their heads back, seeing against the sun
Blaze the armed man carven on his shield, and hear
The laughter of little bells along the brace
Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown, and watch,
High up, the cloven shadow of either plume
Divide the bright light of the brass, and make
His helmet as a windy and wintering moon
Seen through blown cloud and plume-like drift, when ships
Drive, and men strive with all the sea, and oars
Break, and the beaks dip under, drinking death;
Yet was he then but a span long, and moaned
With inarticulate mouth inseparate words,
And with blind lips and fingers wrung my breast
Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands and feet,
Murmuring; but those gray women with bound hair
Who fright the gods frighted not him; he laughed
Seeing them, and pushed out hands to feel and haul
Distaff and thread, intangible; but they
Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my heart
Laughed likewise, having all my will of heaven.
But now I know not if to left or right
The gods have drawn us hither; for again
I dreamt, and saw the black brand burst on fire
As a branch bursts in flower, and saw the flame
Fade flower-wise, and Death came and with dry lips

Blew the charred ash into my breast; and Love
Trampled the ember and crushed it with swift feet.
This I have also at heart; that not for me,
Not for me only or son of mine, O girls,
The gods have wrought life, and desire of life,
Heart's love and heart's division; but for all
There shines one sun and one wind blows till night.
And when night comes the wind sinks and the sun,
And there is no light after, and no storm,
But sleep and much forgetfulness of things.
In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods
Years hence, and heard high sayings of one most wise,
Eurythemis my mother, who beheld
With eyes alive and spake with lips of these
As one on earth disfleshed and disallied
From breath or blood corruptible; such gifts
Time gave her, and an equal soul to these
And equal face to all things; thus she said.
But whatsoever intolerable or glad
The swift hours weave and unweave, I go hence
Full of mine own soul, perfect of myself,
Toward mine and me sufficient; and what chance
The gods cast lots for and shake out on us,
That shall we take, and that much bear withal.
And now, before these gather to the hunt,
I will go arm my son and bring him forth,
Lest love or some man's anger work him harm.

Chorus. Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

Meleager. O sweet new heaven and air without a star,
Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to men

With deeds to do and praise to pluck from thee.
Come forth a child, born with clear sound and light,
With laughter and swift limbs and prosperous looks;
That this great hunt with heroes for the hounds
May leave thee memorable and us well sped.
Althæa. Son, first I praise thy prayer, then bid thee speed;
But the gods hear men's hands before their lips,
And heed beyond all crying and sacrifice
Light of things done and noise of laboring men.
But thou, being armed and perfect for the deed,
Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind they grow,
The men thy fellows, and the choice of the world,
Bound to root out the tuskèd plague, and leave
Thanks and safe days and peace in Calydon.
Meleager. For the whole city and all the low-lying land
Flames, and the soft air sounds with them that come;
The gods give all these fruit of all their works.
Althæa. Set thine eye thither and fix thy spirit and say
Whom there thou knowest; for sharp mixed shadow and wind
Blown up between the morning and the mist,
With steam of steeds and flash of bridle or wheel,
And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn,
And dust divided by hard light, and spears
That shine and shift as the edge of wild beasts' eyes,
Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind edge
Burns, and bright points break up and baffle day.
Meleager. The first, for many I know not, being far off,
Peleus the Larissæan, couched with whom
Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and silver-shod,
Fair as fled foam, a goddess; and their son
Most swift and splendid of men's children born,
Most like a god, full of the future fame.
Althæa. Who are these shining like one sundered star?
Meleager. Thy sister's sons, a double flower of men.
Althæa. O sweetest kin to me in all the world,
O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious heads
Like kindled lights in untempestuous heaven,
Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam of fight,
With what glad heart and kindliness of soul,
Even to the staining of both eyes with tears
And kindling of warm eyelids with desire,
A great way off I greet you, and rejoice
Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as gods.
Far off ye come, and least in years of these,
But lordliest, but worth love to look upon.
Meleager. Even such (for sailing hither I saw far hence,
And where Eurotas hollows his moist rock
Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted stream)
Even such I saw their sisters; one swan-white,
The little Helen, and less fair than she
Fair Clytæmnestra, grave as pasturing fawns
Who feed and fear some arrow; but at whiles,
As one smitten with love or wrung with joy,
She laughs and lightens with her eyes, and then

Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed, weeps too,
And the other chides her, and she being chid speaks nought,
But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses her,
Laughing; so fare they, as in their bloomless bud
And full of unblown life, the blood of gods.
Althæa. Sweet days befall them and good loves and lords,
And tender and temperate honors of the hearth,
Peace, and a perfect life and blameless bed.
But who shows next an eagle wrought in gold,
That flames and beats broad wings against the sun
And with void mouth gapes after emptier prey?
Meleager. Know by that sign the reign of Telamon
Between the fierce mouths of the encountering brine
On the strait reefs of twice-washed Salamis.
Althæa. For like one great of hand he bears himself,
Vine-chapleted, with savors of the sea,
Glittering as wine and moving as a wave.
But who girt round there roughly follows him?
Meleager. Ancæus, great of hand, an iron bulk,
Two-edged for fight as the axe against his arm,
Who drives against the surge of stormy spears
Full-sailed; him Cepheus follows, his twin-born,
Chief name next his of all Arcadian men.
Althæa. Praise be with men abroad; chaste lives with us,
Home-keeping days and household reverences.
Meleager. Next by the left unsandalled foot know thou
The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,
Thy brethren, Toxeus and the violent-souled
Plexippus, over-swift with hand and tongue;
For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant mouth
Blows and corrupts their work with barren breath.
Althæa. Speech too bears fruit, being worthy; and air blows down
Things poisonous, and high-seated violences,
And with charmed words and songs have men put out
Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.
Meleager. Yea, all things have they, save the gods and love.
Althæa. Love thou the law and cleave to things ordained.
Meleager. Law lives upon their lips whom these applaud.
Althæa. How sayest thou these? what god applauds new things?
Meleager. Zeus, who hath fear and custom under foot.
Althæa. But loves not laws thrown down and lives awry.
Meleager. Yet is not less himself than his own law.
Althæa. Nor shifts and shuffles old things up and down.
Meleager. But what he will remoulds and discreates.
Althæa. Much, but not this, that each thing live its life.
Meleager. Nor only live, but lighten and lift up higher.
Althæa. Pride breaks itself, and too much gained is gone.
Meleager. Things gained are gone, but great things done endure.
Althæa. Child, if a man serve law through all his life
And with his whole heart worship, him all gods
Praise; but who loves it only with his lips,
And not in heart and deed desiring it
Hides a perverse will with obsequious words;
Him heaven infatuates and his twin-born fate
Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins far off,

And the swift hounds of violent death devour.
Be man at one with equal-minded gods,
So shall he prosper; not through laws torn up,
Violated rule and a new face of things.
A woman armed makes war upon herself,
Unwomanlike, and treads down use and wont
And the sweet common honor that she hath,
Love, and the cry of children, and the hand
Trothplight and mutual mouth of marriages.
This doth she, being unloved; whom if one love,
Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed wars
Are deadlier than her lips or braided hair.
For of the one comes poison, and a curse
Falls from the other and burns the lives of men.
But thou, son, be not filled with evil dreams,
Nor with desire of these things; for with time
Blind love burns out; but if one feed it full
Till some discoloring stain dyes all his life,
He shall keep nothing praiseworthy, nor die
The sweet wise death of old men honorable,
Who have lived out all the length of all their years
Blameless, and seen well-pleased the face of gods,
And without shame and without fear have wrought
Things memorable, and while their days held out
In sight of all men and the sun's great light
Have gat them glory and given of their own praise
To the earth that bare them and the day that bred,
Home friends and far-off hospitalities,
And filled with gracious and memorial fame
Lands loved of summer or washed by violent seas,
Towns populous and many unfooted ways,
And alien lips and native with their own.
But when white age and venerable death
Mow down the strength and life within their limbs,
Drain out the blood and darken their clear eyes,
Immortal honor is on them, having past
Through splendid life and death desirable
To the clear seat and remote throne of souls,
Lands indiscoverable in the unheard-of west,
Round which the strong stream of a sacred sea
Rolls without wind forever, and the snow
There shows not her white wings and windy feet,
Nor thunder nor swift rain saith any thing,
Nor the sun burns, but all things rest and thrive;
And these, filled full of days, divine and dead,
Sages and singers fiery from the god,
And such as loved their land and all things good
And, best beloved of best men, liberty,
Free lives and lips, free hands of men free-born,
And whatsoever on earth was honorable
And whosoever of all the ephemeral seed,
Live there a life no liker to the gods
But nearer than their life of terrene days.
Love thou such life, and look for such a death.
But from the light and fiery dreams of love
Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless life,

isions not dreams, whose lids no
charm shall close,
or song assuage them waking; and
swift death
rushes with sterile feet the unripening
ear,
reads out the timeless vintage; whom
do thou
schewing embrace the luck of this thy
life,
ot without honor; and it shall bear
to thee
ich fruit as men reap from spent hours
and wear,
ew men, but happy; of whom be thou,
O son,
appiest, if thou submit thy soul to
fate,
nd set thine eyes and heart on hopes
high-born
nd divine deeds and abstinence divine.
o shalt thou be toward all men all thy
days
s light and might communicable, and
burn
rom heaven among the stars above
the hours,
nd break not as a man breaks nor
burn down:
or to whom other of all heroic names
ave the gods given his life in hand as
thine?
nd gloriously hast thou lived, and
made thy life
o me that bare thee and to all men
born
ankworthy, a praise forever; and
hast won fame
hen wild wars broke all round thy
father's house,
nd the mad people of windy mountain
ways
id spears against us like a sea, and
all
tolia thundered with Thessalian
hoofs;
et these, as wind baffles the foam, and
beats
raight back the relaxed ripple, didst
thou break
nd loosen all their lances, till undone
nd man from man they fell; for ye
twain stood
God against god, Ares and Artemis,
And thou the mightier, wherefore she
unleashed
A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt
overcome;
For in the greener blossom of thy life
Ere the full blade caught flower, and
when time gave
Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor
sleep,
But with great hand and heart seek
praise of men
Out of sharp straits and many a griev-
ous thing,
Seeing the strange foam of undivided
seas
On channels never sailed in, and by
shores
Where the old winds cease not blowing,
and all the night
Thunders, and day is no delight to
men.
Chorus. Meleager, a noble wisdom
and fair words
The gods have given this woman: hear
thou these.
Meleager. O mother, I am not fain to
strive in speech
Nor set my mouth against thee, who art
wise
Even as they say, and full of sacred
words.
But one thing I know surely, and cleave
to this;
That though I be not subtle of wit as
thou
Nor womanlike to weave sweet words,
and melt
Mutable minds of wise men as with
fire,
I too, doing justly and reverencing the
gods,
Shall not want wit to see what things
be right.
For whom they love and whom reject,
being gods,
There is no man but seeth, and in good
time
Submits himself, refraining all his heart.
And I too, as thou sayest, have seen
great things;
Seen otherwhere, but chiefly when the
sail

First caught between stretched ropes the roaring west,
And all our oars smote eastward, and the wind
First flung round faces of seafaring men
White splendid snow-flakes of the sundering foam,
And the first furrow in virginal green sea
Followed the plunging ploughshare of hewn pine,
And closed, as when deep sleep subdues man's breath
Lips close and heart subsides; and closing, shone
Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and moved
Round many a trembling mouth of doubtful gods,
Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs
Through waning water and into shallow light,
That watched us; and when flying the dove was snared
As with men's hands, but we shot after and sped
Clear through the irremeable Symplegades;
And chiefliest when hoar beach and herbless cliff
Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we heard
Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through narrowing reefs
The lightning of the intolerable wave
Flash, and the white wet flame of breakers burn
Far under a kindling south-wind, as a lamp
Burns and bends all its blowing flame one way,
Wild heights untravelled of the wind, and vales
Cloven seaward by their violent streams, and white
With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf of brine;
Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and bowing birdwise
Shriek with birds' voices, and with furious feet
Tread loose the long skirts of a storm; and saw
The whole white Euxine clash together and fall
Full-mouthed, and thunderous from a thousand throats:
Yet we drew thither, and won the fleece, and won
Medea, deadlier than the sea; but there
Seeing many a wonder, and fearful things to men,
I saw not one thing like this one seen here,
Most fair and fearful, feminine, a god,
Faultless; whom I that love not, being unlike,
Fear, and give honor, and choose from all the gods.

Œneus. Lady, the daughter of Thestius, and thou, son,
Not ignorant of your strife nor l'ght of wit,
Scared with vain dreams and fluttering like spent fire,
I come to judge between you, but a king
Full of past days and wise from years endured.
Nor thee I praise, who art fain to undo things done:
Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them overmuch.
For what the hours have given is given, and this
Changeless; howbeit these change, and in good time
Devise new things and good, not one thing still.
Us have they sent now, at our need for help,
Among men armed a woman, foreign born,
Virgin, not like the natural flower of things
That grows and bears, and brings forth fruit, and dies;
Unlovable, no light for a husband's house,
Espoused; a glory among unwedded girls,
And chosen of gods who reverence maidenhood.
These too we honor in honoring her: but thou,

Abstain thy feet from following, and thine eyes
From amorous touch; nor set toward hers thine heart,
Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit than love.
Althæa. O king, thou art wise, but wisdom halts; and just,
But the gods love not justice more than fate,
And smite the righteous and the violent mouth,
And mix with insolent blood the reverent man's,
And bruise the holier as the lying lips.
Enough; for wise words fail me, and my heart
Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O my son,
O child, for thine head's sake; mine eyes wax thick,
Turning toward thee, so goodly a weaponed man,
So glorious; and for love of thine own eyes
They are darkened, and tears burn them, fierce as fire,
And my lips pause and my soul sinks with love.
But by thine hand, by thy sweet life and eyes,
By thy great heart and these clasped knees, O son,
I pray thee that thou slay me not with thee.
For there was never a mother woman-born
Loved her sons better; and never a queen of men
More perfect in her heart toward whom she loved.
For what lies light on many and they forget,
Small things and transitory as a wind o' the sea,
I forget never; I have seen thee all thine years
A man in arms, strong and a joy to men
Seeing thine head glitter and thine hand burn its way
Through a heavy and iron furrow of sundering spears;
But always also a flower of three suns old,
The small one thing that lying drew down my life
To lie with thee and feed thee; a child and weak,
Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to me.
Who then sought to thee? who gat help? who knew
If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at all.
Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with thine oar,
Child? or what strange land shone with war through thee?
But fair for me thou wert, O little life,
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh, and blind,
More than much gold, ungrown, a foolish flower.
For silver nor bright snow nor feather of foam
Was whiter, and no gold yellower than thine hair,
O child, my child; and now thou art lordlier grown,
Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine eyes,
I charge thee by thy soul and this my breast,
Fear thou the gods and me and thine own heart,
Lest all these turn against thee; for who knows
What wind upon what wave of altering time
Shall speak a storm and blow calamity?
And there is nothing stabile in the world
But the gods break it; yet not less, fair son,
If but one thing be stronger, if one endure,
Surely the bitter and the rooted love
That burns between us, going from me to thee,
Shall more endure than all things. What dost thou,
Following strange loves? why wilt thou kill mine heart?
Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and fall

From my clear wits, and seem of mine own self
Dethroned, dispraised, dis-seated; and my mind,
That was my crown, breaks, and mine heart is gone,
And I am naked of my soul, and stand
Ashamed, as a mean woman; take thou thought:
Live if thou wilt, and if thou wilt not, look,
The gods have given thee life to lose or keep,
Thou shalt not die as men die, but thine end
Fallen upon thee shall break me unaware.
Meleager. Queen, my whole heart is molten with thy tears,
And my limbs yearn with pity of thee, and love
Compels with grief mine eyes and laboring breath:
For what thou art I know thee, and this thy breast
And thy fair eyes I worship, and am bound
Toward thee in spirit and love thee in all my soul.
For there is nothing terribler to men
Than the sweet face of mothers, and the might.
But what shall be, let be; for us the day
Once only lives a little, and is not found.
Time and the fruitful hour are more than we,
And these lay hold upon us; but thou, God,
Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of things,
Father, be swift to see us, and as thou wilt
Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt, refrain.
Chorus. We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair; thou art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove.
Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire;
Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid;
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath:
But Fate is the name of her; and his name is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
And the seed of it laughter and tears,
And the leaves of it madness and scorn;
A bitter flower from the bud,
Sprung of the sea without root,
Sprung without graft from the years.

The weft of the world was untorn
That is woven of the day on the night,
The hair of the hours was not white
Nor the raiment of time overworn,
When a wonder, a world's delight,
A perilous goddess was born;
And the waves of the sea as she came
Clove, and the foam at her feet,
Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
A fleshly blossom, a flame
Filling the heavens with heat
To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,
And men upon earth that hear
Sweet articulate words
Sweetly divided apart,
And in shallow and channel and mere
The rapid and footless herds,
Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
She is fair, she is white like a dove,
And the life of the world in her breath
Breathes, and is born at her birth;
For they knew thee for mother of love,
And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
Mother, when winds were at ease,
As a flower of the springtime of corn,
A flower of the foam of the seas?
For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
For before thee some rest was on earth,
A little respite from tears,
A little pleasure of life;
For life was not then as thou art,
But as one that waxeth in years
Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
Earth had no thorn, and desire
No sting, neither death any dart;
What hadst thou to do amongst these,
Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas
As an ear from a seed of corn,
As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
As a ray shed forth of the morn,
For division of soul and disease,
For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
Mother, and anguish on earth
Born with a man at his birth,
Wastes underfoot, and above
Storm out of heaven, and dearth
Shaken down from the shining thereof,
Wrecks from afar overseas
And peril of shallow and firth,
And tears that spring and increase
In the barren places of mirth,
That thou, having wings as a dove,
Being girt with desire for a girth,
That thou must come after these,
That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
But death should have risen with thee,
Mother, and visible fear,
Grief, and the wringing of hands,
And noise of many that mourn;
The smitten bosom, the knee
Bowed, and in each man's ear
A cry as of perishing lands,
A moan as of people in prison,
A tumult of infinite griefs;
And thunder of storm on the sands,
And wailing of wives on the shore;
And under thee newly arisen
Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
Fierce air and violent light;
Sail rent and sundering oar,
Darkness, and noises of night;
Clashing of streams in the sea,
Wave against wave as a sword,
Clamor of currents, and foam;
Rains making ruin on earth,
Winds that wax ravenous and roam
As wolves in a wolfish horde;
Fruits growing faint in the tree,
And blind things dead in their birth:
Famine, and blighting of corn,
When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of; but thee
Who shall discern or declare?
In the uttermost ends of the sea
The light of thine eyelids and hair,
The light of thy bosom as fire
Between the wheel of the sun
And the flying flames of the air?
Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have pity,
But abide with despair and desire
And the crying of armies undone,
Lamentation of one with another
And breaking of city by city;
The dividing of friend against friend,
The severing of brother and brother;
Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
And cast out gods from their places.
These things are spoken of thee.
Strong kings and goodly with gold
Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
And made their kingdoms and races
As dust and surf of the sea.
All these, overburdened with woes
And with length of their days waxen weak,
Thou slewest; and sentest moreover

Upon Tyro an evil thing,
Rent hair and a fetter and blows
Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
Though she lay by a god as a lover,
Though fair, and the seed of a king.
For of old, being full of thy fire,
She endured not longer to wear
On her bosom a saffron vest,
On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;
Being mixed and made one through desire
With Enipeus, and all her hair
Made moist with his mouth, and her breast
Filled full of the foam of the river.

Atalanta. Sun, and clear light among green hills, and day
Late risen and long sought after, and you just gods
Whose hands divide anguish and recompense,
But first the sun's white sister, a maid in heaven,
On earth of all maids worshipped — hail, and hear,
And witness with me if not without sign sent,
Not without rule and reverence, I a maid
Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom I serve,
Here in your sight and eyeshot of these men
Stand, girt as they toward hunting, and my shafts
Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on my side,
If I be pure and all ye righteous gods,
Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no wife,
That bear a spear for spindle, and this bow strung
For a web woven; and with pure lips salute
Heaven, and the face of all the gods, and dawn
Filling with maiden flames and maiden flowers
The starless fold o' the stars, and making sweet
The warm wan heights of the air, moon-trodden ways
And breathless gates and extreme hills of heaven.
Whom, having offered water and bloodless gifts,
Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure hair,
Next Artemis I bid be favorable
And make this day all golden, hers and ours,
Gracious and good and white to the unblamed end.
But thou, O well-beloved, of all my days
Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all,
To bring forth leaves and bind round all my hair
With perfect chaplets woven for thine of thee.
For not without the word of thy chaste mouth,
For not without law given and clean command,
Across the white straits of the running sea
From Elis even to the Acheloïan horn,
I with clear winds came hither and gentle gods,
Far off my father's house, and left uncheered
Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills
And all their green-haired waters, and all woods
Disconsolate, to hear no horn of mine
Blown, and behold no flash of swift white feet.

Meleager. For thy name's sake and awe toward thy chaste head,
O holiest Atalanta, no man dares
Praise thee, though fairer than whom all men praise,
And godlike for thy grace of hallowed hair
And holy habit of thine eyes, and feet
That make the blown foam neither swift nor white
Though the wind winnow and whirl it; yet we praise
Gods, found because of thee adorable

And for thy sake praiseworthiest from all men:
Thee therefore we praise also, thee as these,
Pure, and a light lit at the hands of gods.
Toxeus. How long will ye whet spears with eloquence,
Fight, and kill beasts dry-handed with sweet words?
Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars at home.
Plexippus. Why, if she ride among us for a man,
Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown girl
Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou here.
Meleager. Peace, and be wise; no gods love idle speech.
Plexippus. Nor any man a man's mouth woman-tongued.
Meleager. For my lips bite not sharper than mine hands.
Plexippus. Nay, both bite soft, but no whit softly mine.
Meleager. Keep thine hands clean; they have time enough to stain.
Plexippus. For thine shall rest and wax not red to-day.
Meleager. Have all thy will of words; talk out thine heart.
Althea. Refrain your lips, O brethren, and my son,
Lest words turn snakes and bite you uttering them.
Toxeus. Except she give her blood before the gods,
What profit shall a maid be among men?
Plexippus. Let her come crowned and stretch her throat for a knife,
Bleat out her spirit, and die, and so shall men
Through her too prosper and through prosperous gods;
But nowise through her living; shall she live
A flower-bud of the flower-bed, or sweet fruit
For kisses and the honey-making mouth,
And play the shield for strong men and the spear?
Then shall the heifer and her mate lock horns,
And the bride overbear the groom, and men
Gods; for no less division sunders these;
Since all things made are seasonable in time,
But if one alter unseasonable are all.
But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may slay
This beast before thee and no man halve with me
Nor woman, lest these mock thee, though a god,
Who hast made men strong, and thou being wise be held
Foolish; for wise is that thing which endures.
Atalanta. Men, and the chosen of all this people, and thou,
King, I beseech you, a little bear with me.
For if my life be shameful that I live,
Let the gods witness, and their wrath; but these
Cast no such word against me. Thou, O mine,
O holy, O happy goddess, if I sin
Changing the words of women and the works
For spears and strange men's faces, hast not thou
One shaft of all thy sudden seven that pierced
Seven through the bosom or shining throat or side,
All couched about one mother's loosening knees,
All holy born, engraffed of Tantalus?
But if toward any of you I am overbold
That take thus much upon me, let him think
How I, for all my forest holiness,
Fame, and this armed and iron maidenhood,
Pay thus much also; I shall have no man's love
Forever, and no face of children born
Or feeding lips upon me or fastening eyes
Forever, nor being dead shall kings my sons

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Mourn me and bury, and tears on daughters' cheeks
Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but strange,
But far from dances and the back-blowing torch,
Far off from flowers or any bed of man,
Shall my life be forever: me the snows
That face the first o' the morning, and cold hills
Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling storms
And many a wandering wing of noisy nights
That know the thunder and hear the thickening wolves —
Me the utmost pine and footless frost of woods
That talk with many winds and gods, the hours
Re-risen, and white divisions of the dawn,
Springs thousand-tongued with the intermitting reed,
And streams that murmur of the mother snow —
Me these allure, and know me; but no man
Knows, and my goddess only. Lo now, see
If one of all you these things vex at all.
Would God that any of you had all the praise
And I no manner of memory when I die,
So might I show before her perfect eyes
Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my death.
But for the rest let all have all they will;
For is it a grief to you that I have part,
Being woman merely, in your male might and deeds
Done by main strength? yet in my body is throned
As great a heart, and in my spirit, O men,
I have not less of godlike. Evil it were
That one a coward should mix with you, one hand
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these
Well might ye hate and well revile, not me.
For not the difference of the several flesh
Being vile or noble or beautiful or base
Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit and heart
Higher than these meaner mouths and limbs, that feed,
Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for me,
What should I say? but by the gods of the world
And this my maiden body, by all oaths
That bind the tongue of men and the evil will,
I am not mighty-minded, nor desire
Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things nor the fame;
Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry out,
Laugh, having eaten, and leap without a lyre;
Sing, mix the wind with clamor, smite and shake
Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,
And fill the dance up with tempestuous feet.
For I will none; but having prayed my prayers
And made thank-offering for prosperities,
I shall go hence, and no man see me more.
What thing is this for you to shout me down,
What, for a man to grudge me this my life
As it were envious of all yours, and I
A thief of reputations? nay, for now,
If there be any highest in heaven, a god
Above all thrones and thunders of the gods
Throned, and the wheel of the world roll under him,
Judge he between me and all of you, and see
If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain
Transgressing hands and reinless mouths, and keep
Silence, lest by much foam of violent words
And proper poison of your lips ye die.

Œneus. O flower of Tegea, maiden, fleetest foot

And holiest head of women, have good cheer
Of thy good words: but ye, depart with her
In peace and reverence, each with blameless eye
Following his fate; exalt your hands and hearts,
Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and wound on wound,
And go with gods, and with the gods return.

Chorus. Who hath given man speech? or who hath set therein
A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?
For in the word his life is and his breath,
And in the word his death,
That madness and the infatuate heart may breed
From the word's womb the deed
And life bring one thing forth ere all pass by,
Even one thing which is ours yet cannot die, —

Death. Hast thou seen him ever anywhere,
Time's twin-born brother, imperishable as he
Is perishable and plaintive, clothed with care
And mutable as sand,
But death is strong and full of blood and fair
And perdurable and like a lord of land?
Nay, time thou seest not, death thou wilt not see
Till life's right hand be loosened from thine hand,
And thy life-days from thee.
For the gods very subtly fashion
Madness with sadness upon earth:
Not knowing in any wise compassion,
Nor holding pity of any worth;
And many things they have given and taken,
And wrought and ruined many things;
The firm land have they loosed and shaken,
And sealed the sea with all her springs;
They have wearied time with heavy burdens,
And vexed the lips of life with breath:
Set men to labor and given them guerdons,
Death, and great darkness after death:
Put moans into the bridal measure
And on the bridal wools a stain;
And circled pain about with pleasure,
And girdled pleasure about with pain;
And strewed one marriage-bed with tears and fire
For extreme loathing and supreme desire.

What shall be done with all these tears of ours?
Shall they make water-springs in the fair heaven
To bathe the brows of morning? or like flowers
Be shed and shine before the starriest hours,
Or made the raiment of the weeping Seven?
Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
Food for the famine of the grievous sea,
A great well-head of lamentation
Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow
Among the years and seasons to and fro,
And wash their feet with tribulation
And fill them full with grieving ere they go?
Alas, our lords, and yet alas again!
Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as gold
But all we smite thereat in vain;
Smite the gates barred with groanings manifold,
But all the floors are paven with our pain.
Yea, and with weariness of lips and eyes,
With breaking of the bosom, and with sighs,
We labor, and are clad and fed with grief
And filled with days we would not fain behold
And nights we would not hear of; we wax old,
All we wax old and wither like a leaf.

We are outcast, strayed between bright sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish; and the noon
As midnight, and the night as day-light hours.
A little fruit a little while is ours,
And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
Lay hands upon the draught that quickeneth,
Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things done,
And stir with soft imperishable breath
The bubbling bitterness of life and death,
And hold it to our lips, and laugh; but they
Preserve their lips from tasting night or day,
Lest they too change and sleep, the fates that spun,
The lips that made us and the hands that slay;
Lest all these change, and heaven bow down to none,
Change and be subject to the secular sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.
Therefore they thrust it from them, putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp and sweet
With multitudinous days and nights and tears
And many mixing savors of strange years,
Were no more trodden of them under feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy places:
That life were given them as a fruit to eat
And death to drink as water; that the light
Might ebb, drawn backward from their eyes, and night
Hide for one hour the imperishable faces.
That they might rise up sad in heaven, and know
Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young snow,
One cold as blight of dew and ruinous rain;
Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and be
Awhile as all things born with us and we,
And grieve as men, and like slain men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but one saith
The gods are gracious, praising God; and one,
When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt his breath
Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as the sun,
Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?
None hath beheld him, none
Seen above other gods and shapes of things,
Swift without feet and flying without wings,
Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
Insatiable, not known of night or day,
The lord of love and loathing and of strife,
Who gives a star, and takes a sun away;
Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife
To the earthly body and grievous growth of clay;
Who turns the large limbs to a little flame,
And binds the great sea with a little sand;
Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame;
Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand;
Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,
Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,
Smites without sword, and scourges without rod,—
The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,
One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,
And made us transitory and hazardous,
Light things and slight;
Yet have men praised thee, saying, He hath made man thus,
And he doeth right.
Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten; thou hast laid
Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,
Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up your breath,
And with thy right hand laid upon us death.
Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken sleep with dreams,
Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy shall be;
Thou hast made sweet springs for all the pleasant streams,
In the end thou hast made them bitter with the sea.
Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men;
Thou hast marred one face with fire of many tears;
Thou hast taken love, and given us sorrow again;
With pain thou hast filled us full to the eyes and ears.
Therefore because thou art strong, our father, and we
Feeble; and thou art against us, and thine hand
Constrains us in the shallows of the sea
And breaks us at the limits of the land;
Because thou hast bent thy lightnings as a bow,
And loosed the hours like arrows; and let fall
Sins and wild words and many a wingèd woe
And wars among us, and one end of all;
Because thou hast made the thunder, and thy feet
Are as a rushing water when the skies
Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat,
And flames of fire the eyelids of thine eyes;
Because thou art over all who are over us;
Because thy name is life, and our name death;
Because thou art cruel, and men are piteous,
And our hands labor, and thine hand scattereth:
Lo, with hearts rent and knees made tremulous,
Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual breath,
At least we witness of thee ere we die
That these things are not otherwise, but thus;
That each man in his heart sigheth, and saith,
That all men even as I,
All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high.
But ye, keep ye on earth
Your lips from over-speech,
Loud words and longing are so little worth;
And the end is hard to reach.
For silence after grievous things is good,
And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,
And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
And lordship of the soul.
But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
For words divide and rend;
But silence is most noble till the end.

Althæa. I heard within the house a cry of news,
And came forth eastward hither, where the dawn
Cheers first these warder gods that face the sun,
And next our eyes unrisen; for unaware
Came clashes of swift hoofs and trampling feet,
And through the windy pillared corridor
Light sharper than the frequent flames of day
That daily fill it from the fiery dawn;

Gleams, and a thunder of people that cried out,
And dust and hurrying horsemen; lo their chief,
That rode with Œneus rein by rein, returned.
What cheer, O herald of my lord the king?
Herald. Lady, good cheer and great: the boar is slain.
Chorus. Praised be all gods that look toward Calydon.
Althæa. Good news and brief; but by whose happier hand?
Herald. A maiden's and a prophet's and thy son's.
Althæa. Well fare the spear that severed him and life.
Herald. Thine own, and not an alien, hast thou blest.
Althæa. Twice be thou too for my sake blest and his.
Herald. At the king's word I rode afoam for thine.
Althæa. Thou sayest he tarrieth till they bring the spoil?
Herald. Hard by the quarry, where they breathe, O queen.
Althæa. Speak thou their chance; but some bring flowers, and crown
These gods and all the lintel, and shed wine,
Fetch sacrifice and slay; for Heaven is good.
Herald. Some furlongs northward where the brakes begin,
West of that narrowing range of warrior hills
Whose brooks have bled with battle when thy son
Smote Acarnania, there all they made halt,
And with keen eye took note of spear and hound,
Royally ranked: Laertes island-born,
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,
And Cepheus and Ancæus, mightiest thewed,
Arcadians; next, and evil-eyed of these,
Arcadian Atalanta, with twain hounds
Lengthening the leash, and under nose and brow
Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-swift eye;
But from her white braced shoulder the plumed shafts
Rang, and the bow shone from her side; next her
Meleager, like a sun in spring that strikes
Branch into leaf and bloom into the world,
A glory among men meaner; Iphicles,
And following him that slew the biform bull
Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,
And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides;
Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-born
The seer and sayer of visions and of truth,
Amphiaraus; and a fourfold strength,
Thine, even thy mother's and thy sister's sons;
And recent from the roar of foreign foam
Jason, and Dryas twin-begot with war,
A blossom of bright battle, sword and man
Shining; and Idas; and the keenest eye
Of Lynceus; and Admetus twice-espoused;
And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in heart.
These having halted bade blow horns, and rode
Through woods and waste lands cleft by stormy streams,
Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of pines,
And where the dew is thickest under oaks,
This way and that; but questing up and down
They saw no trail, nor scented; and one said, —
Plexippus, — Help, or help not, Artemis,
And we will flay thy boar-skin with male hands;
But saying, he ceased and said not that he would,
Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-struck marsh

Shook with a thousand reeds untunable,
And in their moist and multitudinous flower
Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions fed,
The blind bulk of the immeasurable beast.
And seeing, he shuddered with sharp lust of praise
Through all his limbs, and launched a double dart,
And missed; for much desire divided him,
Too hot of spirit and feebler than his will,
That his hand failed, though fervent; and the shaft,
Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem
Shook, and stuck fast. Then all abode save one,
The Arcadian Atalanta: from her side
Sprang her hounds, laboring at the leash, and slipped,
And plashed ear-deep with plunging feet; but she,
Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy sake,
Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the sudden string
Rang, and sprang inward, and the waterish air
Hissed, and the moist plumes of the songless reeds
Moved as a wave which the wind moves no more.
But the boar heaved half out of ooze and slime
His tense flank trembling round the barbèd wound,
Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes
And bristling with intolerable hair
Plunged, and the hounds clung, and green flowers and white
Reddened and broke all round them where they came.
And charging with sheer tusk he drove, and smote
Hyleus; and sharp death caught his sudden soul,
And violent sleep shed night upon his eyes.
Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand and heart,
Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and slew
His comrade born and loving countryman,
Under the left arm smitten, as he no less
Poised a like arrow; and bright blood brake afoam,
And falling, and weighed back by clamorous arms,
Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.
Then one shot happier, the Cadmean seer,
Amphiaraus; for his sacred shaft
Pierced the red circlet of one ravening eye
Beneath the brute brows of the sanguine boar,
Now bloodier from one slain; but he so galled
Sprang straight, and rearing cried no lesser cry
Than thunder and the roar of wintering streams
That mix their own foam with the yellower sea;
And as a tower that falls by fire in fight
With ruin of walls and all its archery,
And breaks the iron flower of war beneath,
Crushing charred limbs and molten arms of men;
So through crushed branches and the reddening brake
Clamored and crashed the fervor of his feet,
And trampled, springing sideways from the tusk,
Too tardy a moving mould of heavy strength,
Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged snow
Break, all the hard thews of his heaving limbs
Broke, and rent flesh fell every way, and blood
Flew, and fierce fragments of no more a man.
Then all the heroes drew sharp breath, and gazed,
And smote not; but Meleager, but thy son,

Right in the wild way of the coming curse
Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fastened lips,
Clear eyes, and springing muscle and shortening limb —
With chin aslant indrawn to a tightening throat,
Grave, and with gathered sinews, like a god, —
Aimed on the left side his well-handled spear
Grasped where the ash was knottiest hewn, and smote,
And with no missile wound, the monstrous boar
Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and bone,
Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to death,
The heavy horror with his hanging shafts
Leapt, and fell furiously, and from raging lips
Foamed out the latest wrath of all his life.
And all they praised the gods with mightier heart,
Zeus and all gods, but chiefliest Artemis,
Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives and flay,
Strip and stretch out the splendour of the spoil;
And hot and horrid from the work all these
Sat, and drew breath, and drank and made great cheer,
And washed the hard sweat off their calmer brows.
For much sweet grass grew higher than grew the reed,
And good for slumber, and every holier herb,
Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote,
And all of goodliest blade and bloom that springs
Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet buds
Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower flowers
And light of crescent lilies, and such leaves
As fear the faun's and know the dryad's foot;
Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
And many a wellspring over-watched of these.
There now they rest; but me the king bade bear
Good tidings to rejoice this town and thee.
Wherefore be glad, and all ye give much thanks,
For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.

Althæa. Laud ye the gods; for this they have given is good,
And what shall be, they hide until their time.
Much good and somewhat grievous hast thou said,
And either well; but let all sad things be,
Till all have made before the prosperous gods
Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral wine.
Look fair, O gods, and favorable; for we
Praise you with no false heart or flattering mouth,
Being merciful, but with pure souls and prayer.

Herald. Thou hast prayed well; for whoso fears not these,
But once being prosperous waxes huge of heart,
Him shall some new thing unaware destroy.

Chorus. O that I now, I too were
By deep wells and water-floods,
Streams of ancient hills, and where
All the wan green places bear
Blossoms cleaving to the sod,
Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair,
Or such darkest ivy-buds
As divide thy yellow hair,
Bacchus, and their leaves that nod
Round thy fawnskin brush the bare
Snow-soft shoulders of a god;
There the year is sweet, and there
Earth is full of secret springs,
And the fervent rose-cheeked hours,
Those that marry dawn and noon,
There are sunless, there look pale
In dim leaves and hidden air,

Pale as grass or latter flowers
Or the wild vine's wan wet rings
Full of dew beneath the moon,
And all day the nightingale
Sleeps, and all night sings;
There in cold remote recesses
That nor alien eyes assail,
Feet, nor imminence of wings,
Nor a wind nor any tune,
Thou, O queen and holiest,
Flower the whitest of all things,
With reluctant lengthening tresses
And with sudden splendid breast
Save of maidens unbeholden,
There art wont to enter, there
Thy divine swift limbs and golden
Maiden growth of unbound hair,
Bathed in waters white,
Shine, and many a maid's by thee
In moist woodland or the hilly
Flowerless brakes where wells abound
Out of all men's sight;
Or in lower pools that see
All their marges clothed all round
With the innumerable lily,
Whence the golden-girdled bee
Flits through flowering rush to fret
White or duskier violet,
Fair as those that in far years
With their buds left luminous
And their little leaves made wet
From the warmer dew of tears,
Mother's tears in extreme need,
Hid the limbs of Iamus,
Of thy brother's seed;
For his heart was piteous
Toward him, even as thine heart now
Pitiful toward us;
Thine, O goddess, turning hither
A benignant blameless brow;
Seeing enough of evil done
And lives withered as leaves wither
In the blasting of the sun;
Seeing enough of hunters dead,
Ruin enough of all our year,
Herds and harvests slain and shed,
Herdsmen stricken many an one,
Fruits and flocks consumed together,
And great length of deadly days.
Yet with reverent lips and fear
Turn we toward thee, turn and praise
For this lightening of clear weather
And prosperities begun.

For not seldom, when all air
As bright water without breath
Shines, and when men fear not, fate
Without thunder unaware
Breaks, and brings down death.
Joy with grief ye great gods give,
Good with bad, and overbear
All the pride of us that live,
All the high estate,
As ye long since overbore,
As in old time long before,
Many a strong man and a great,
All that were.
But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
Having heed of all our prayer,
Taking note of all our sighs;
We beseech thee by thy light,
By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
And the kingdom of the night,
Be thou favorable and fair;
By thine arrows and thy might
And Orion overthrown;
By the maiden thy delight,
By the indissoluble zone
And the sacred hair.

Messenger. Maidens, if ye will sing now, shift your song,
Bow down, cry, wail for pity; is this a time
For singing? nay, for strewing of dust and ash,
Rent raiment, and for bruising of the breast.

Chorus. What new thing wolf-like lurks behind thy words?
What snake's tongue in thy lips? what fire in the eyes?

Messenger. Bring me before the queen, and I will speak.

Chorus. Lo, she comes forth as from thank-offering made.

Messenger. A barren offering for a bitter gift.

Althæa. What are these borne on branches, and the face
Covered? no mean men living, but now slain
Such honor have they, if any dwell with death.

Messenger. Queen, thy twain brethren and thy mother's sons.

Althæa. Lay down your dead till I behold their blood
If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

Messenger. Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no more.
Althæa. O brethren, O my father's sons, of me
Well loved and well reputed, I should weep
Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn from you
But that I know you not uncomforted,
Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain,
For my son surely hath avenged you dead.
Messenger. Nay, should thine own seed slay himself, O queen?
Althæa. Thy double word brings forth a double death.
Messenger. Know this then singly, by one hand they fell.
Althæa. What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous mouth?
Messenger. Slain by thy son's hand: is that saying so hard?
Althæa. Our time is come upon us: it is here.
Chorus. O miserable, and spoiled at thine own hand!
Althæa. Wert thou not called Meleager from this womb?
Chorus. A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.
Althæa. Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not devour?
Chorus. The fire thou madest, will it consume even thee?
Althæa. My dreams are fallen upon me: burn thou too.
Chorus. Not without God are visions born and die.
Althæa. The gods are many about me; I am one.
Chorus. She groans as men wrestling with heavier gods.
Althæa. They rend me, they divide me, they destroy.
Chorus. Or one laboring in travail of strange births.
Althæa. They are strong, they are strong: I am broken, and these prevail.
Chorus. The god is great against her: she will die.
Althæa. Yea, but not now; for my heart too is great.
I would I were not here in sight of the sun.
But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will die.
Messenger. O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne thyself,
A little word may hold so great mischance.
For, in division of the sanguine spoil,
These men thy brethren wrangling bade yield up
The boar's head and the horror of the hide,
That this might stand a wonder in Calydon,
Hallowed; and some drew toward them; but thy son,
With great hands grasping all that weight of hair,
Cast down the dead heap clanging and collapsed
At female feet, saying, This thy spoil, not mine,
Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath reaped,
And all this praise God gives thee: she thereat
Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred night
The sky sees laugh and redden and divide
Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun,
Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morning heave,
Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-lit hours,
And maiden undulation of clear hair
Color the clouds; so laughed she from pure heart
Lit with a low blush to the braided hair,
And rose-colored and cold like very dawn,
Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste lips,
A faint grave laugh; and all they held their peace,
And she passed by them. Then one cried, Lo now,
Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips at us,
Saying all we were despoiled by this one girl?

And all they rode against her violently,
And cast the fresh crown from her hair, and now
They had rent her spoil away, dishonoring her,
Save that Meleager, as a tame lion chafed,
Bore on them, broke them, and as fire cleaves wood
So clove and drove them, smitten in twain; but she
Smote not nor heaved up hand; and this man first,
Plexippus, crying out, This for love's sake, sweet,
Drove at Meleager, who with spear straightening
Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus made for him,
Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and violent words,
Fruitless: for him too, stricken through both sides
The earth felt falling, and his horse's foam
Blanched thy son's face, his slayer. And these being slain,
None moved nor spake; but Œneus bade bear hence
These made of heaven infatuate in their deaths,
Foolish; for these would baffle fate, and fell.
And they passed on, and all men honored her,
Being honorable, as one revered of heaven.

Althæa. What say you, women? is all this not well done?

Chorus. No man doth well but God hath part in him.

Althæa. But no part here; for these my brethren born
Ye have no part in, these ye know not of
As I that was their sister, a sacrifice
Slain in their slaying. I would I had died for these;
For this man dead walked with me, child by child,
And made a weak staff for my feebler feet
With his own tender wrist and hand, and held
And led me softly, and showed me gold and steel
And shining shapes of mirror and bright crown,
And all things fair; and threw light spears, and brought
Young hounds to huddle at my feet, and thrust
Tame heads against my little maiden breasts,
And please me with great eyes; and those days went,
And these are bitter, and I a barren queen
And sister miserable, a grievous thing,
And mother of many curses; and she too,
My sister Leda, sitting overseas
With fair fruits round her, and her faultless lord,
Shall curse me, saying, A sorrow and not a son,
Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire,
A brand consuming thine own soul and me.
But ye now, sons of Thestius, make good cheer,
For ye shall have such wood to funeral fire
As no king hath; and flame that once burnt down
Oil shall not quicken, or breath relume, or wine
Refresh again; much costlier than fine gold,
And more than many lives of wandering men.

Chorus. O queen, thou hast yet with thee love-worthy things, —
Thine husband, and the great strength of thy son.

Althæa. Who shall get brothers for me while I live?
Who bear them? who bring forth in lieu of these?
Are not our fathers and our brethren one,
And no man like them? are not mine here slain?
Have we not hung together, he and I,
Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,
With mother-milk for honey? and this man too,

Dead, with my son's spear thrust between his sides,
Hath he not seen us, later born than he,
Laugh with lips filled, and laughed again for love?
There were no sons then in the world, nor spears,
Nor deadly births of women; but the gods
Allowed us, and our days were clear of these.
I would I had died unwedded, and brought forth
No swords to vex the world; for these that spake
Sweet words long since, and loved me, will not speak
Nor love nor look upon me; and all my life
I shall not hear nor see them living men.
But I too living, how shall I now live?
What life shall this be with my son, to know
What hath been, and desire what will not be,
Look for dead eyes, and listen for dead lips,
And kill mine own heart with remembering them,
And with those eyes that see their slayer alive
Weep, and wring hands that clasp him by the hand?
How shall I bear my dreams of them, to hear
False voices, feel the kisses of false mouths
And footless sound of perished feet, and then
Wake, and hear only, it may be, their own hounds
Whine masterless in miserable sleep,
And see their boar-spears and their beds and seats
And all the gear and housings of their lives
And not the men? Shall hounds and horses mourn,
Pine with strange eyes, and prick up hungry ears,
Famish and fail at heart for their dear lords,
And I not heed at all? and those blind things
Fall off from life for love's sake, and I live?
Surely some death is better than some life,
Better one death for him and these and me.
For, if the gods had slain them, it may be
I had endured it; if they had fallen by war,
Or by the nets and knives of privy death
And by hired hands while sleeping, this thing too
I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,
Had this despatched them, under tusk or tooth
Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for all deaths
Or honorable, or with facile feet avenged
And hands of swift gods following, all save this,
Are bearable. But not for their sweet land
Fighting, but not a sacrifice, lo these
Dead; for I had not then shed all mine heart
Out at mine eyes: then either with good speed,
Being just, I had slain their slayer atoningly,
Or strewn with flowers their fire, and on their tombs
Hung crowns, and over them a song, and seen
Their praise outflame their ashes: for all men,
All maidens, had come thither, and from pure lips
Shed songs upon them, from heroic eyes
Tears; and their death had been a deathless life;
But now, by no man hired nor alien sword,
By their own kindred are they fallen, in peace,
After much peril, friendless among friends,
By hateful hands they loved; and how shall mine

Touch these returning red and not from war,
These fatal from the vintage of men's veins,
Dead men my brethren? how shall these wash off
No festal stains of undelightful wine,
How mix the blood, my blood on them, with me,
Holding mine hand? or how shall I say, Son,
That am no sister? But by night and day
Shall we not sit and hate each other, and think
Things hate-worthy? not live with shamefast eyes,
Browbeaten, treading soft with fearful feet,
Each unupbraided, each without rebuke
Convicted, and without a word reviled
Each of another? and I shall let thee live
And see thee strong, and hear men for thy sake
Praise me, but these thou wouldest not let live
No man shall praise forever? these shall lie
Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through thee?
Sweet were they toward me living, and mine heart
Desired them, but was then well satisfied,
That now is as men hungered; and these dead
I shall want always to the day I die.
For all things else and all men may renew;
Yea, son for son the gods may give and take,
But never a brother or sister any more.

Chorus. Nay, for the son lies close about thine heart,
Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb, and drains
Life, and the blood of life, and all thy fruit,
Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks bread and eats,
Treads wine and drinks, thyself, a sect of thee;
And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh faint?
Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for thirst?
This thing moves more than all things, even thy son,
That thou cleave to him; and he shall honor thee,
Thy womb that bare him and the breasts he knew,
Reverencing most for thy sake all his gods.

Althæa. But these the gods too gave me; and these my son,
Not reverencing his gods, nor mine own heart,
Nor the old sweet years, nor all venerable things,
But cruel, and in his ravin like a beast,
Hath taken away to slay them: yea, and she,
She the strange woman, she the flower, the sword,
Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to men,
Adorable, detestable, — even she
Saw with strange eyes, and with strange lips rejoiced,
Seeing these mine own slain of mine own, and me
Made miserable above all miseries made,
A grief among all women in the world,
A name to be washed out with all men's tears.

Chorus. Strengthen thy spirit: is this not also a god,
Chance, and the wheel of all necessities?
Hard things have fallen upon us from harsh gods,
Whom, lest worse hap, rebuke we not for these.

Althæa. My spirit is strong against itself, and I
For these things' sake cry out on mine own soul,
That it endures outrage, and dolorous days,
And life, and this inexpiable impotence.
Weak am I, weak and shameful; my breath drawn

Shames me, and monstrous things and violent gods.
What shall atone? what heal me? what bring back
Strength to the foot, light to the face? what herb
Assuage me? what restore me? what release?
What strange thing eaten or drunken, O great gods,
Make me as you, or as the beasts that feed,
Slay and divide and cherish their own hearts?
For these ye show us; and we less than these
Have not wherewith to live as all these things
Which all their lives fare after their own kind
As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill,
Weeping or laughing, we whom eyesight fails,
Knowledge and light of face and perfect heart,
And hands we lack, and wit; and all our days
Sin, and have hunger, and die infatuated.
For madness have ye given us, and not health,
And sins whereof we know not; and for these
Death, and sudden destruction, unaware.
What shall we say now? what thing comes of us?

Chorus. Alas! for all this all men undergo.

Althæa. Wherefore I will not that these twain, O gods,
Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping things,
Abominable, a loathing; but though dead
Shall they have honor and such funereal flame
As strews men's ashes in their enemies' face,
And blinds their eyes who hate them: lest men say,
"Lo how they lie, and living had great kin;
And none of these hath pity of them, and none
Regards them lying, and none is wrung at heart,
None moved in spirit for them, naked and slain,
Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort them;"
And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis,
Hearing how these her sons come down to her
Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men,
And had a queen their sister. That were shame
Worse than this grief. Yet how to atone at all
I know not; seeing the love of my born son,
A new-made mother's new-born love, that grows
From the soft child to the strong man, now soft,
Now strong as either, and still one sole same love,
Strives with me, no light thing to strive withal:
This love is deep, and natural to man's blood,
And ineffaceable with many tears.
Yet shall not these rebuke me, though I die,
Nor she in that waste world with all her dead,
My mother, among the pale flocks fallen as leaves,
Folds of dead people, and alien from the sun;
Nor lack some bitter comfort, some poor praise,
Being queen, to have borne her daughter like a queen
Righteous; and though mine own fire burn me too,
She shall have honor, and these her sons, though dead.
But all the gods will, all they do, and we
Not all we would, yet somewhat; and one choice
We have, to live and do just deeds and die.

Chorus. Terrible words she communes with, and turns

Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,
And murmurs as who talks in dreams with death.
Althæa. For the unjust also dieth, and him all men
Hate, and himself abhors the unrighteousness,
And seeth his own dishonor intolerable.
But I being just, doing right upon myself,
Slay mine own soul, and no man born shames me.
For none constrains nor shall rebuke, being done,
What none compelled me doing; thus these things fare.
Ah, ah! that such things should so fare; ah me!
That I am found to do them and endure,
Chosen and constrained to choose, and bear myself
Mine own wound through mine own flesh to the heart
Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,
A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own son.
Ah, ah! for me too as for these; alas!
For that is done that shall be, and mine hand
Full of the deed, and full of blood mine eyes,
That shall see never nor touch any thing
Save blood unstanched and fire unquenchable.
Chorus. What wilt thou do? what ails thee? for the house
Shakes ruinously: wilt thou bring fire for it?
Althæa. Fire in the roofs, and on the lintels fire.
Ho ye, who stand and weave, between the doors,
Shere; and blood drips from hand and thread, and stains
Shreshold and raiment and me passing in
Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops of death.
Chorus. Alas that time is stronger than strong men,
Hate than all gods! and these are fallen on us.
Althæa. A little since, and I was glad; and now
I never shall be glad or sad again.
Chorus. Between two joys a grief grows unaware.
Althæa. A little while, and I shall laugh; and then
I shall weep never, and laugh not any more.
Chorus. What shall be said? for words are thorns to grief.
Withhold thyself a little, and fear the gods.
Althæa. Fear died when these were slain; and I am as dead,
And fear is of the living; these fear none.
Chorus. Have pity upon all people for their sake.
Althæa. It is done now: shall I put back my day?
Chorus. An end is come, an end: this is of God.
Althæa. I am fire, and burn myself: keep clear of fire.
Chorus. The house is broken, is broken; it shall not stand.
Althæa. Woe, woe for him that breaketh; and a rod
Smote it of old, and now the axe is here.
Chorus. Not as with sundering of the earth,
Nor as with cleaving of the sea,
Nor fierce foreshadowings of a birth,
Nor flying dreams of death to be,
Nor loosening of the large world's girth,
And quickening of the body of night,
And sound of thunder in men's ears,
And fire of lightning in men's sight,
Fate, mother of desires and fears,
Bore unto men the law of tears.
But sudden, an unfathered lame,
And broken out of night, she shone,—
She, without body, without name,
In days forgotten and foregone;
And heaven rang round her as she came,

Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare;
Clouds and great stars, thunders and snows,
The blue sad fields and folds of air,
The life that breathes, the life that grows,
All wind, all fire, that burns or blows,
Even all these knew her: for she is great,
The daughter of doom, the mother of death,
The sister of sorrow; a lifelong weight
That no man's finger lighteneth,
Nor any god can lighten fate;
A landmark seen across the way
Where one race treads as the other trod;
An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
The bitter jealousy of God.

For death is deep as the sea,
And fate as the waves thereof.
Shall the waves take pity on thee,
Or the south-wind offer thee love?
Wilt thou take the night for thy day,
Or the darkness for light on thy way,
Till thou say in thine heart Enough?
Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over wise;
The sweetness of spring in thine hair, and the light in thine eyes.
The light of the spring in thine eyes, and the sound in thine ears;
Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with sighs, and thine eyelids with tears.
Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold, and with silver thy feet?
Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee, and made thy mouth sweet?
Behold, when thy face is made bare, he that loved thee shall hate;
Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of thy fate.
For thy life shall fall as a leaf, and be shed as the rain;
And the veil of thine head shall be grief; and the crown shall be pain.

Althæa. Ho, ye that wail, and ye that sing, make way
Till I be come among you. Hide your tears,
Ye little weepers, and your laughing lips,
Ye laughers, for a little; lo mine eyes
That outweep heaven at rainiest, and my mouth
That laughs as gods laugh at us! Fate's are we,
Yet fate is ours a breathing-space; yea, mine,
Fate is made mine forever; he is my son,
My bedfellow, my brother. You strong gods,
Give place unto me; I am as any of you,
To give life and to take life. Thou, old earth,
That hast made man and unmade; thou whose mouth
Looks red from the eaten fruits of thine own womb;
Behold me with what lips upon what food
I feed and fill my body; even with flesh
Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit
I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with flame
I burn up even the dust and ash thereof.

Chorus. Woman, what fire is this thou burnest with?

Althæa. Yea to the bone, yea to the blood and all.

Chorus. For this thy face and hair are as one fire.

Althæa. A tongue that licks and beats upon the dust.

Chorus. And in thine eyes are hollow light and heat.

Althæa. Of flame not fed with hand or frankincense.

Chorus. I fear thee for the trembling of thine eyes.

Althæa. Neither with love they tremble, nor for fear.

Chorus. And thy mouth shuddering like a shot bird.

Althæa. Not as the bride's mouth when man kisses it.

Chorus. Nay, but what thing is this thing thou hast done?
Althæa. Look, I am silent, speak your eyes for me.
Chorus. I see a faint fire lightening from the hall.
Althæa. Gaze, stretch your eyes, strain till the lids drop off.
Chorus. Flushed pillars down the flickering vestibule.
Althæa. Stretch with your necks like birds: cry, chirp as they.
Chorus. And a long brand that blackens: and white dust.
Althæa. O children, what is this ye see? your eyes
Are blinder than night's face at fall of moon.
That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life,
My travail, and the year's weight of my womb,
Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands
And of mine hands extinguished: this is he.
Chorus. O gods, what word has flown out at thy mouth?
Althæa. I did this, and I say this, and I die.
Chorus. Death stands upon the doorway of thy lips,
And in thy mouth has death set up his house.
Althæa. O death, a little, a little while, sweet death,
Until I see the brand burnt down and die.
Chorus. She reels as any reed under the wind,
And cleaves unto the ground with staggering feet.
Althæa. Girls, one thing will I say and hold my peace.
I that did this will weep not nor cry out,
Cry ye and weep: I will not call on gods,
Call ye on them; I will not pity man,
Show ye your pity. I know not if I live;
Save that I feel the fire upon my face,
And on my cheek the burning of a brand.
Yea, the smoke bites me; yea, I drink the steam
With nostril and with eyelid and with lip
Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands
Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I reel
As one made drunk with living, whence he draws
Drunken delight; yet I, though mad for joy,
Loathe my long living, and am waxen red
As with the shadow of shed blood; behold,
I am kindled with the flames that fade in him,
I am swollen with subsiding of his veins,
I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit eyes
Flame with the falling fire that leaves his lids
Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with blood
Because his face is ashen. Yet, O child,
Son, first-born, fairest — O sweet mouth, sweet eyes,
That drew my life out through my suckling breast,
That shone and clove mine heart through — O soft knees
Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,
Cheeks warm with little kissings — O child, child,
What have we made each other? Lo, I felt
Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of beauty, O son,
Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving lips,
The floral hair, the little lightening eyes
And all thy goodly glory; with mine hands
Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue
Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's time,
For all the little likeness of thy limbs,
Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to fight,

A lordly leader; and hear before I die,
"She bore the goodliest sword of all the world."
Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on me;
I am severed from myself, my name is gone,—
My name that was a healing, it is changed:
My name is a consuming. From this time,
Though mine eyes reach to the end of all these things,
My lips shall not unfasten till I die.
Semichorus. She has filled with sighing the city,
And the ways thereof with tears;
She arose, she girdled her sides,
She set her face as a bride's;
She wept, and she had no pity;
Trembled, and felt no fears.
Semichorus. Her eyes were clear as the sun,
Her brows were fresh as the day;
She girdled herself with gold,
Her robes were manifold;
But the days of her worship are done,
Her praise is taken away.
Semichorus. For she set her hand to the fire,
With her mouth she kindled the same;
As the mouth of a flute-player,
So was the mouth of her;
With the might of her strong desire
She blew the breath of the flame.
Semichorus. She set her hand to the wood,
She took the fire in her hand;
As one who is nigh to death,
She panted with strange breath
She opened her lips unto blood,
She breathed and kindled the brand.
Semichorus. As a wood-dove newly shot,
She sobbed and lifted her breast;
She sighed and covered her eyes,
Filling her lips with sighs;
She sighed, she withdrew herself not,
She refrained not, taking not rest.

Semichorus. But as the wind which is drouth,
And as the air which is death,
As storm that severeth ships,
Her breath severing her lips,
The breath came forth of her mouth,
And the fire came forth of her breath.
Second Messenger. Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us
A thing more deadly than the face of death:
Meleager the good lord is as one slain.
Semichorus. Without sword, without sword is he stricken;
Slain, and slain without hand.
Second Messenger. For as keen ice divided of the sun
His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the flesh
Thaws from off all his body to the hair.
Semichorus. He wastes as the embers quicken;
With the brand he fades as a brand.
Second Messenger. Even while they sang, and all drew hither, and he
Lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's hair,
And fix the looser leaves, both hands fell down.
Semichorus. With rending of cheek and of hair
Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.
Second Messenger. Straightway the crown slid off, and smote on earth,
First fallen; and he, grasping his own hair, groaned,
And cast his raiment round his face, and fell.
Semichorus. Alas for visions that were,
And soothsayings spoken in sleep!
Second Messenger. But the king twitched his reins in, and leapt down,
And caught him, crying out twice "O child!" and thrice,
So that men's eyelids thickened with their tears.
Semichorus. Lament with a long lamentation,
Cry, for an end is at hand.

Second Messenger. "O son!" he said,
"son, lift thine eyes, draw breath,
Pity me!" But Meleager with sharp lips
Gasped, and his face waxed like as sunburnt grass.
Semichorus. Cry aloud, O thou kingdom, O nation,
O stricken, a ruinous land!
Second Messenger. Whereat king Œneus, straightening feeble knees,
With feeble hands heaved up a lessening weight,
And laid him sadly in strange hands, and wept.
Semichorus. Thou art smitten, her lord, her desire,
Thy dear blood wasted as rain.
Second Messenger. And they with tears and rendings of the beard
Bear hither a breathing body, wept upon
And lightening at each footfall, sick to death.
Semichorus. Thou madest thy sword as a fire,
With fire for a sword thou art slain.
Second Messenger. And lo, the feast turned funeral, and the crowns
Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter trapped;
And weeping and changed faces and veiled hair.
Meleager. Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head;
Lift ye my feet
As the feet of the dead;
For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten as lead.
Chorus. O thy luminous face,
Thine imperious eyes!
O the grief, O the grace,
As of day when it dies!
Who is this bending over thee, lord, with tears and suppression of sighs?
Meleager. Is a bride so fair?
Is a maid so meek?
With unchapleted hair,
With unfilleted cheek,
Atalanta, the pure among women, whose name is as blessing to speak.

Atalanta. I would that with feet
Unsandalled, unshod,
Overbold, overfleet,
I had swum not nor trod
From Arcadia to Calydon northward, a blast of the envy of God.
Meleager. Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith
In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath;
Yet I would that in clamor of battle mine hands had laid hold upon death.
Chorus. Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,
When the lord of fought fields
Breaketh spear-shaft from spear,
Thou art broken, our lord, thou art broken, with travail and labor and fear.
Meleager. Would God he had found me
Beneath fresh boughs!
Would God he had bound me
Unawares in mine house,
With light in mine eyes, and songs in my lips, and a crown on my brows!
Chorus. Whence art thou sent from us?
Whither thy goal?
How art thou rent from us,
Thou that wert whole,
As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as with sundering of body and soul!
Meleager. My heart is within me
As an ash in the fire;
Whosoever hath seen me,
Without lute, without lyre,
Shall sing of me grievous things, even things that were ill to desire.
Chorus. Who shall raise thee
From the house of the dead?
Or what man praise thee
That thy praise may be said?
Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas thine head!
Meleager. But thou, O mother,
The dreamer of dreams,
Wilt thou bring forth another
To feel the sun's beams
When I move among shadows a shadow, and wail by impassable streams?

Œneus. What thing wilt thou leave me
Now this thing is done?
A man wilt thou give me,
A son for my son,
For the light of mine eyes, the desire of my life, the desirable one?

Chorus. Thou wert glad above others,
Yea, fair beyond word;
Thou wert glad among mothers;
For each man that heard
Of thee, praise there was added unto thee, as wings to the feet of a bird.

Œneus. Who shall give back
Thy face of old years,
With travail made black,
Grown gray among fears,
Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing, mother of tears?

Meleager. Though thou art as fire
Fed with fuel in vain,
My delight, my desire,
Is more chaste than the rain,
More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that live without stain.

Atalanta. I would that as water
My life's blood had thawn,
Or as winter's wan daughter
Leaves lowland and lawn
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had beheld thee made dark in thy dawn.

Chorus. When thou dravest the men
Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again,
Nor endured he thy face
Clothed round with the blush of the battle, with light from a terrible place.

Œneus. Thou shouldst die as he dies
For whom none sheddeth tears;
Filling thine eyes
And fulfilling thine ears
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom and the beauty, the splendor of spears.

Chorus. In the ears of the world
It is sung, it is told,
And the light thereof hurled
And the noise thereof rolled
From the Acroceraunian snow to the ford of the fleece of gold.

Meleager. Would God ye could carry me
Forth of all these;
Heap sand and bury me
By the Chersonese
Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the thunder of Pontic seas.

Œneus. Dost thou mock at our praise
And the singing begun
And the men of strange days
Praising my son
In the folds of the hills of home, high places of Calydon?

Meleager. For the dead man no home is;
Ah, better to be
What the flower of the foam is
In fields of the sea,
That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment for me.

Chorus. Who shall seek thee and bring
And restore thee thy day,
When the dove dipt her wing,
And the oars won their way
Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits of Propontis with spray?

Meleager. Will ye crown me my tomb
Or exalt me my name,
Now my spirits consume,
Now my flesh is a flame?
Let the sea slake it once, and men speak of me sleeping to praise me or shame.

Chorus. Turn back now, turn thee,
As who turns him to wake;
Though the life in thee burn thee,
Couldst thou bathe it and slake
Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs heavier, and east upon west waters break?

Meleager. Would the winds blow me back
Or the waves hurl me home?
Ah, to touch in the track
Where the pine learnt to roam
Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-gods, cool blossoms of water and foam!

Chorus. The gods may release
That they made fast;
Thy soul shall have ease
In thy limbs at the last;
But what shall they give thee for life, sweet life that is overpast?
Meleager. Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves
To the life of the rains in the grasses, the life of the dews on the leaves.
Chorus. Thou wert helmsman and chief;
Wilt thou turn in an hour,
Thy limbs to the leaf,
Thy face to the flower,
Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the gods who divide and devour?
Meleager. The years are hungry,
They wail all their days;
The gods wax angry
And weary of praise;
And who shall bridle their lips? and who shall straiten their ways?
Chorus. The gods guard over us
With sword and with rod;
Weaving shadow to cover us,
Heaping the sod,
That law may fulfil herself wholly, to darken man's face before God.
Meleager. O holy head of Œneus, lo thy son
Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet foul
With kinship of contaminated lives,
Lo, for their blood I die; and mine own blood
For blood-shedding of mine is mixed therewith,
That death may not discern me from my kin.
Yet with clean heart I die and faultless hand,
Not shamefully; thou therefore of thy love
Salute me, and bid fare among the dead
Well, as the dead fare; for the best man dead
Fares sadly; nathless I now faring well
Pass without fear where nothing is to fear,
Having thy love about me and thy goodwill,
O father, among dark places and men dead.
Œneus. Child, I salute thee with sad heart and tears,
And bid thee comfort, being a perfect man
In fight, and honorable in the house of peace.
The gods give thee fair wage and dues of death,
And me brief days and ways to come at thee.
Meleager. Pray thou thy days be long before thy death,
And full of ease and kingdom; seeing in death
There is no comfort and none after-growth,
Nor shall one thence look up and see day's dawn
Nor light upon the land whither I go.
Live thou, and take thy fill of days, and die
When thy day comes; and make not much of death,
Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil thing.
Thou too, the bitter mother and mother-plague
Of this my weary body — thou too, queen,
The source and end, the sower and the scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought that slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring that feeds,
To make me and unmake me, — thou, I say,
Althæa, since my father's ploughshare, drawn
Through fatal seedland of a female field,
Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten ear
Strong from the sun and fragrant from the rains
I sprang, and cleft the closure of thy womb,

Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue
Hail thee as holy, and worship thee as just,
Who art unjust and unholy; and with my knees
Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,
Dissundering them, devour me; for these limbs
Are as light dust and crumblings from mine urn
Before the fire has touched them; and my face
As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on snow,
And all this body a broken barren tree
That was so strong, and all this flower of life
Disbranched and desecrated miserably,
And minished all that godlike muscle and might,
And lesser than a man's: for all my veins
Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns down.
I would thou hadst let me live; but gods averse,
But fortune, and the fiery feet of change,
And time, these would not, these tread out my life, —
These and not thou; me too thou hast loved, and I
Thee; but this death was mixed with all my life,
Mine end with my beginning: and this law,
This only, slays me, and not my mother at all.
And let no brother or sister grieve too sore,
Nor melt their hearts out on me with their tears,
Since extreme love and sorrowing overmuch
Vex the great gods, and over-loving men
Slay and are slain for love's sake; and this house
Shall bear much better children; why should these
Weep? but in patience let them live their lives
And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,
Mother, thou sole and only, thou not these,
Keep me in mind a little when I die
Because I was thy first-born; let thy soul
Pity me, pity even me gone hence and dead.
Though thou wert wroth, and though thou bear again
Much happier sons, and all men later born
Exceedingly excel me, yet do thou
Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy son.
Time was, I did not shame thee; and time was,
I thought to live, and make thee honorable
With deeds as great as these men's: but they live,
These, and I die; and what thing should have been,
Surely I know not; yet I charge thee, seeing
I am dead already, love me not the less,
Me, O my mother! I charge thee by these gods,
My father's, and that holier breast of thine,
By these that see me dying, and that which nursed,
Love me not less, thy first-born: though grief come,
Grief only, of me, and of all these great joy,
And shall come always to thee; for thou knowest,
O mother, O breasts that bare me, for ye know,
O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes,
Ye know my soul albeit I sinned, ye know
Albeit I kneel not, neither touch thy knees,
But with my lips I kneel, and with my heart
I fall about thy feet and worship thee.
And ye farewell now, all my friends; and ye,
Kinsmen, much younger and glorious more than I,
Sons of my mother's sister; and all farewell

That were in Colchis with me, and bare down
The waves and wars that met us: and though times
Change, and though now I be not any thing,
Forget not me among you, what I did
In my good time; for even by all those days,
Those days and this, and your own living souls,
And by the light and luck of you that live,
And by this miserable spoil, and me
Dying, I beseech you, let my name not die.
But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-like hands,
And fasten up mine eyelids with thy mouth,
A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine arms,
Printing with heavy lips my light waste flesh,
Made light and thin by heavy-handed fate,
And with thine holy maiden eyes drop dew,
Drop tears for dew upon me who am dead,
Me who have loved thee; seeing without sin done
I am gone down to the empty weary house
Where no flesh is, nor beauty, nor swift eyes,
Nor sound of mouth, nor might of hands and feet.
But thou, dear, hide my body with thy veil,
And with thy raiment cover foot and head,
And stretch thyself upon me, and touch hands
With hands and lips with lips: be pitiful
As thou art maiden perfect; let no man
Defile me to despise me, saying, This man
Died woman-wise, a woman's offering, slain
Through female fingers in his woof of life,
Dishonorable; for thou hast honored me.
And now for God's sake kiss me once and twice,
And let me go; for the night gathers me,
And in the night shall no man gather fruit.

Atalanta. Hail thou! but I with heavy face and feet
Turn homeward, and am gone out of thine eyes.

Chorus. Who shall contend with his lords,
Or cross them, or do them wrong?
Who shall bind them as with cords?
Who shall tame them as with song?
Who shall smite them as with swords?
For the hands of their kingdom are strong.

ERECHTHEUS: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER.

PERSONS.

ERECHTHEUS.
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN ELDERS.
PRAXITHEA.
CHTHONIA.
HERALD OF EUMOLPUS.
MESSENGER.
ATHENIAN HERALD.
ATHENA.

Erechtheus. Mother of life and death and all men's days,
Earth, whom I chief of all men born would bless,
And call thee with more loving lips than theirs
Mother, for of this very body of thine
And living blood I have my breath and live,
Behold me, even thy son, me crowned of men,
Me made thy child by that strong, cunning god
Who fashions fire and iron, who begat
Me for a sword and beacon-fire on thee,
Me fosterling of Pallas, in her shade
Reared, that I first might pay the nursing debt,
Hallowing her fame with flower of third-year feasts,
And first bow down the bridled strength of steeds
To lose the wild wont of their birth, and bear
Clasp of man's knees and steerage of his hand,
Or fourfold service of his fire-swift wheels
That whirl the four-yoked chariot; me the king
Who stand before thee naked now, and cry,
O holy and general mother of all men born,
But mother most and motherliest of mine,
Earth, for I ask thee rather of all the gods,
What have we done? what word mistimed or work
Hath winged the wild feet of this timeless curse
To fall as fire upon us? Lo, I stand
Here on this brow's crown of the city's head
That crowns its lovely body, till death's hour
Waste it; but now the dew of dawn and birth
Is fresh upon it from thy womb, and we
Behold it born how beauteous: one day more
I see the world's wheel of the circling sun
Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth
This one thing goodliest, fair as heaven or he,
Worth a god's gaze or strife of gods; but now

Would this day's ebb of their spent wave of strife
Sweep it to sea, wash it on wreck, and leave
A costless thing contemned; and in our stead,
Where these walls were, and sounding streets of men,
Make wide a waste for tongueless water-herds
And spoil of ravening fishes; that no more
Should men say, Here was Athens. This shalt thou
Sustain not, nor thy son endure to see,
Nor thou to live and look on; for the womb
Bare me not base that bare me miserable,
To hear this loud brood of the Thracian foam
Break its broad strength of billowy-beating war
Here, and upon it as a blast of death
Blowing, the keen wrath of a fire-souled king,
A strange growth grafted on our natural soil,
A root of Thrace in Eleusinian earth
Set for no comfort to the kindly land,
Son of the sea's lord and our first-born foe,
Eumolpus; nothing sweet in ears of thine
The music of his making, nor a song
Toward hopes of ours auspicious; for the note
Rings as for death oracular to thy sons
That goes before him on the sea-wind blown
Full of this charge laid on me, to put out
The brief light kindled of mine own child's life,
Or with this helmsman hand that steers the state
Run right on the under shoal and ridge of death
The populous ship with all its fraught-age gone,
And sails that were to take the wind of time
Rent, and the tackling that should hold out fast
In confluent surge of loud calamities
Broken, with spars of rudders and lost oars
That were to row toward harbor, and find rest
In some most glorious haven of all the world,
And else may never near it: such a song
The gods have set his lips on fire withal
Who threatens now in all their names to bring
Ruin; but none of these, thou knowest, have I
Chid with my tongue, or cursed at heart for grief,
Knowing how the soul runs reinless on sheer death
Whose grief or joy takes part against the gods.
And what they will is more than our desire,
And their desire is more than what we will.
For no man's will and no desire of man's
Shall stand as doth a god's will. Yet, O fair
Mother, that seest me how I cast no word
Against them, plead no reason, crave no cause,
Boast me not blameless, nor beweep me wronged,
By this fair wreath of towers we have decked thee with,
This chaplet that we give thee woven of walls,
This girdle of gate and temple and citadel
Drawn round beneath thy bosom, and fast linked
As to thine heart's root, — this dear crown of thine,
This present light, this city, — be not thou
Slow to take heed nor slack to strengthen her,
Fare we so short-lived howsoe'er, and pay

What price we may to ransom thee thy town,
Not me my life; but thou that diest not, thou,
Though all our house die for this people's sake,
Keep thou for ours thy crown our city, guard
And give it life the lovelier that we died.
Chorus. Sun, that hast lightened and loosed by thy might
Ocean and Earth from the lordship of night,
Quickening with vision his eye that was veiled,
Freshening the force in her heart that had failed,
That sister fettered and blinded brother
Should have sight by thy grace and delight of each other,
Behold now and see
What profit is given them of thee;
What wrath has enkindled with madness of mind
Her limbs that were bounden, his face that was blind,
To be locked as in wrestle together, and lighten
With fire that shall darken thy fire in the sky,
Body to body and eye against eye
In a war against kind,
Till the bloom of her fields and her high hills whiten
With the foam of his waves more high.
For the sea-marks set to divide of old
The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth assigned,
The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields' gold,
His wine-bright waves from her vineyards' fold,
Frail forces we find
To bridle the spirit of gods or bind
Till the heat of their hearts wax cold.
But the peace that was stablished between them to stand
Is rent now in twain by the strength of his hand
Who stirs up the storm of his sons overbold
To pluck from fight what he lost of right,
By council and judgment of gods that spake
And gave great Pallas the strife's fair stake,
The lordship and love of the lovely land,
The grace of the town that hath on it for crown
But a headband to wear
Of violets one-hued with her hair:
For the vales and the green high places of earth
Hold nothing so fair,
And the depths of the sea bear no such birth
Of the manifold births they bear.
Too well, too well was the great stake worth
A strife divine for the gods to judge,
A crowned god's triumph, a foiled god's grudge,
Though the loser be strong and the victress wise
Who played long since for so large a prize,
The fruitful immortal anointed adored
Dear city of men without master or lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun,
Slaves of no man, subjects of none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
That none from the pride of her head may rend,
Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary,
Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own flame,
A name as his name,
Athens, a praise without end.

A noise is arisen against us of waters,
A sound as of battle come up from the sea.
Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;
They have staked their nets round the fair young city,
That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters
Should find not whither alive to flee.
And we know not yet of the word unwritten,
The doom of the Pythian we have not heard;
From the navel of earth and the veiled mid altar
We wait for a token with hopes that falter,
With fears that hang on our hearts thought-smitten
Lest her tongue be kindled with no good word.
O thou not born of the womb, nor bred
In the bride-night's warmth of a changed god's bed,
ıt thy life as a lightning was flashed from the light of thy father's head,
O chief god's child by a motherless birth,
If aught in thy sight we indeed be worth,
eep death from us thou, that art none of the gods of the dead under earth.
Thou that hast power on us, save, if thou wilt;
Let the blind wave breach not thy wall scarce built;
ıt bless us not so as by bloodshed, impute not for grace to us guilt,
Nor by price of pollution of blood set us free;
Let the hands be taintless that clasp thy knee,
ɔr a maiden be slain to redeem for a maiden her shrine from the sea.
O earth, O sun, turn back
Full on his deadly track
Death, that would smite you black and mar your creatures,
And with one hand disroot
All tender flower and fruit,
With one strike blind and mute the heaven's fair features,
Pluck out the eyes of morn, and make
Silence in the east and blackness whence the bright songs break.
Help, earth, help, heaven, that hear
The song-notes of our fear,
Shrewd notes and shrill, not clear or joyful-sounding;
Hear, highest of gods, and stay
Death on his hunter's way,
Full on his forceless prey his beagles hounding;
Break thou his bow, make short his hand,
Maim his fleet foot whose passage kills the living land.
Let a third wave smite not us, father,
Long since sore smitten of twain,
Lest the house of thy son's son perish,
And his name be barren on earth.
Whose race wilt thou comfort rather
If none to thy son remain?
Whose seed wilt thou choose to cherish
If his be cut off in the birth?
For the first fair graft of his graffing
Was rent from its maiden root
By the strong swift hand of a lover
Who fills the night with his breath;
On the lip of the stream low-laughing
Her green soft virginal shoot
Was plucked from the stream-side cover
By the grasp of a love like death.
For a god's was the mouth that kissed her
Who speaks, and the leaves lie dead,
When winter awakes as at warning
To the sound of his foot from Thrace.
Nor happier the bed of her sister,
Though Love's self laid her abed
By a bridegroom beloved of the morning
And fair as the dawn's own face.

For Procris, ensnared and ensnaring
By the fraud of a twofold wile,
With the point of her own spear stricken,
By the gift of her own hand fell.
Oversubtle in doubts, overdaring
In deeds and devices of guile,
And strong to quench as to quicken,
O Love, have we named thee well?
By thee was the spear's edge whetted
That laid her dead in the dew,
In the moist green glens of the midland,
By her dear lord slain and thee.
And him at the cliff's end fretted
By the gray keen waves, him too,
Thine hand from the white-browed headland
Flung down for a spoil to the sea.
But enough now of griefs gray-growing
Have darkened the house divine,
Have flowered on its boughs, and faded,
And green is the brave stock yet.
O father all-seeing and all-knowing,
Let the last fruit fall not of thine
From the tree with whose boughs we are shaded,
From the stock that thy son's hand set.
Erechtheus. O daughter of Cephisus, from all time
Wise have I found thee, wife and queen, of heart
Perfect; nor in the days that knew not wind
Nor days when storm blew death upon our peace
Was thine heart swoln with seed of pride, or bowed
With blasts of bitter fear that break men's souls
Who lift too high their minds toward heaven, in thought
Too godlike grown for worship; but of mood
Equal, in good time reverent of time bad,
And glad in ill days of the good that were.
Nor now too would I fear thee, now misdoubt
Lest fate should find thee lesser than thy doom,
Chosen if thou be to bear and to be great
Haply beyond all women; and the word
Speaks thee divine, dear queen, that speaks thee dead,
Dead being alive, or quick and dead in one
Shall not men call thee living? yet I fear
To slay thee timeless with my proper tongue,
With lips, thou knowest, that love thee; and such work
Was never laid of gods on men, such word
No mouth of man learnt ever, as from mine,
Most loath to speak, thine ear most loath shall take,
And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.
Praxithea. That word there is not in all speech of man,
King, that being spoken of the gods and thee
I have not heart to honor, or dare hold
More than I hold thee or the gods in hate
Hearing; but if my heart abhor it heard
Being insubmissive, hold me not thy wife,
But use me like a stranger, whom thine hand
Hath fed by chance, and finding thence no thanks
Flung off for shame's sake to forgetfulness.
Erechtheus. O, of what breath shall such a word be made,
Or from what heart find utterance? Would my tongue
Were rent forth rather from the quivering root
Than made as fire or poison thus for thee.
Praxithea. But if thou speak of blood, and I that hear

e chosen of all for this land's love to die,
nd save to thee thy city, know this well,
lappiest I hold me of her seed alive.
Erechtheus. O sun that seest, what saying was this of thine,
od, that thy power has breathed into my lips?
or from no sunlit shrine darkling it came.
Praxithea. What portent from the mid oracular place
ath smitten thee so like a curse that flies
/ingless, to waste men with its plagues? Yet speak.
Erechtheus. Thy blood the gods require not; take this first.
Praxithea. To me than thee more grievous this should sound.
Erechtheus. That word rang truer and bitterer than it knew.
Praxithea. This is not then thy grief, to see me die?
Erechtheus. Die shalt thou not, yet give thy blood to death.
Praxithea. If this ring worse, I know not: strange it rang.
Erechtheus. Alas! thou knowest not; woe is me that know!
Praxithea. And woe shall mine be, knowing; yet halt not here.
Erechtheus. Guiltless of blood this state may stand no more.
Praxithea. Firm let it stand, whatever bleed or fall.
Erechtheus. O gods, that I should say it shall, and weep!
Praxithea. Weep, and say this? no tears should bathe such words.
Erechtheus. Woe's me that I must weep upon them! woe!
Praxithea. What stain is on them for thy tears to cleanse?
Erechtheus. A stain of blood unpurgeable with tears.
Praxithea. Whence? for thou sayest it is and is not mine.
Erechtheus. Hear then, and know why only of all men I
iat bring such news as mine is, I alone
Must wash good words with weeping: I and thou,
Woman, must wail to hear men sing, must groan
To see their joy who love us; all our friends
Save only we, and all save we that love
This holiness of Athens, in our sight
Shall lift their hearts up, in our hearing praise
Gods whom we may not; for to these they give
Life of their children, flower of all their seed,
For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes
Harvest; but we for all our good things, we
Have at their hands which fill all these folk full
Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,
Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these,
Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.
Praxithea. What first they give who give this city good,
For that first given to save it I give thanks
First, and thanks heartier from a happier tongue,
More than for any my peculiar grace
Shown me and not my country; next for this,
That none of all these, but for all these I,
Must bear my burden, and no eye but mine
Weep of all women's in this broad land born
Who see their land's deliverance; but much more,
But most for this I thank them most of all,
That this their edge of doom is chosen to pierce
My heart, and not my country's; for the sword
Drawn to smite there, and sharpened for such stroke
Should wound more deep than any turned on me.

Chorus. Well fares the land that bears such fruit, and well
The spirit that breeds such thought and speech in man.
Erechtheus. O woman, thou hast shamed my heart with thine,
To show so strong a patience: take then all;
For all shall break not nor bring down thy soul.
The word that journeying to the bright god's shrine
Who speaks askance and darkling, but his name
Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ out,
I heard, hear thou: thus saith he: There shall die
One soul for all this people; from thy womb
Came forth the seed that here on dry bare ground
Death's hand must sow untimely, to bring forth
Nor blade nor shoot in season, being by name
To the under gods made holy, who require
For this land's life her death and maiden blood
To save a maiden city. Thus I heard,
And thus with all said leave thee; for save this
No word is left us, and no hope alive.
Chorus. He hath uttered too surely his wrath not obscurely, nor wrapt as in mists of his breath,
The master that lightens not hearts he enlightens, but gives them foreknowledge of death.
As a bolt from the cloud hath he sent it aloud, and proclaimed it afar,
From the darkness and height of the horror of night hath he shown us a star.
Star may I name it, and err not, or flame shall I say,
Born of the womb that was born for the tomb of the day?
O Night, whom other but thee for mother, and Death for the father, Night,
Shall we dream to discover, save thee and thy lover, to bring such a sorrow to sight?
From the slumberless bed for thy bedfellow spread, and his bride under earth,
Hast thou brought forth a wild and insatiable child, an unbearable birth.
Fierce are the fangs of his wrath, and the pangs that they give;
None is there, none that may bear them, not one that would live.
Chthonia. Forth of the fine-spun folds of veils that hide
My virgin chamber toward the full-faced sun
I set my foot, not moved of mine own will,
Unmaidenlike, nor with unprompted speed
Turn eyes too broad or dog-like unabashed
On reverend heads of men and thence on thine,
Mother, now covered from the light and bowed
As hers who mourns her brethren; but what grief
Bends thy blind head thus earthward, holds thus mute,
I know not till thy will be to lift up
Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes, and speak;
And till thy will be, would I know this not.
Praxithea. Old men and childless, or if sons ye have seen
And daughters, elder-born were these than mine,
Look on this child, how young of years, how sweet,
How scant of time and green of age her life
Puts forth its flower of girlhood; and her gait
How virginal, how soft her speech, her eyes
How seemly smiling. Wise should all ye be,
All honorable and kindly men of age:
Now give me counsel and one word to say

That I may bear to speak, and hold my peace
Henceforth for all time even as all ye now.
Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and tongueless mouths,
Unprofitable: if this were wind that speaks,
As much its breath might move you. Thou then, child,
Set thy sweet eyes on mine; look through them well;
Take note of all the writing of my face
As of a tablet or a tomb inscribed
That bears me record; lifeless now, my life
Thereon that was, think written; brief to read,
Yet shall the scripture sear thine eyes as fire,
And leave them dark as dead men's. Nay, dear child,
Thou hast no skill, my maiden, and no sense
To take such knowledge; sweet is all thy lore,
And all this bitter: yet I charge thee, learn
And love and lay this up within thine heart,
Even this my word: less ill it were to die,
Than live and look upon thy mother dead,
Thy mother-land that bare thee; no man slain
But him who hath seen it shall men count unblest,
None blest as him who hath died and seen it not.

Chthonia. That sight some god keep from me though I die!

Praxithea. A god from thee shall keep it: fear not this.

Chthonia. Thanks all my life long shall he gain of mine.

Praxithea. Short gain of all yet shall he get of thee.

Chthonia. Brief be my life, yet so long live my thanks.

Praxithea. So long? so little; how long shall they live?

Chthonia. Even while I see the sunlight and thine eyes.

Praxithea. Would mine might shut ere thine upon the sun!

Chthonia. For me thou prayest unkindly; change that prayer.

Praxithea. Not well for me thou sayest, and ill for thee.

Chthonia. Nay, for me well, if thou shalt live, not I.

Praxithea. How live, and lose these loving looks of thine?

Chthonia. It seems I too, thus praying, then, love thee not.

Praxithea. Lov'st thou not life? what wouldst thou do to die?

Chthonia. Well, but not more than all things, love I life.

Praxithea. And fain wouldst keep it as thine age allows?

Chthonia. Fain would I live, and fain not fear to die.

Praxithea. That I might bid thee die not! Peace; no more.

Chorus. A godlike race of grief the gods have set
For these to run matched equal, heart with heart.

Praxithea. Child of the chief of gods, and maiden crowned,
Queen of these towers and fostress of their king,
Pallas, and thou my father's holiest head,
A living well of life nor stanched nor stained,
O God Cephisus, thee too charge I next,
Be to me judge and witness; nor thine ear
Shall now my tongue invoke not, thou to me
Most hateful of things holy, mournfullest
Of all old sacred streams that wash the world,
Ilissus, on whose marge at flowery play
A whirlwind-footed bridegroom found my child,
And rapt her northward where mine elder-born
Keeps now the Thracian bride-bed of a god

Intolerable to seamen, but this land
Finds him in hope for her sake favorable,
A gracious son by wedlock: hear me then
Thou likewise, if with no faint heart or false
The word I say be said, the gift be given,
Which, might I choose, I had rather die than give
Or speak and die not. Ere thy limbs were made,
Or thine eyes lightened, strife, thou knowest, my child,
'Twixt god and god had risen, which heavenlier name
Should here stand hallowed, whose more liberal grace
Should win this city's worship, and our land
To which of these do reverence; first the lord
Whose wheels make lightnings of the foam-flowered sea
Here on this rock, whose height brow-bound with dawn
Is head and heart of Athens, one sheer blow
Struck, and beneath the triple wound that shook
The stony sinews and stark roots of the earth
Sprang toward the sun a sharp salt fount, and sank
Where lying it lights the heart up of the hill,
A well of bright strange brine; but she that reared
Thy father with her same chaste fostering hand
Set for a sign against it in our guard
The holy bloom of the olive, whose hoar leaf
High in the shadowy shrine of Pandrosus
Hath honor of us all; and of this strife
The twelve most high gods judging with one mouth
Acclaimed her victress: wroth whereat, as wronged
That she should hold from him such prize and place,
The strong king of the tempest-rifted sea
Loosed reinless on the low Thriasian plain
The thunders of his chariots, swallowing stunned
Earth, beasts, and men, the whole blind foundering world
That was the sun's at morning, and ere noon
Death's; nor this only prey fulfilled his mind;
For with strange crook-toothed prows of Carian folk
Who snatch a sanguine life out of the sea,
Thieves keen to pluck their bloody fruit of spoil
From the gray fruitless waters, has their god
Furrowed our shores to waste them, as the fields
Were landward harried from the north with swords
Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering edge
Ground for no hopeful harvest of live grain
Against us in Bœotia: these being spent,
Now this third time his wind of wrath has blown
Right on this people a mightier wave of war,
Three times more huge a ruin; such its ridge
Foam-rimmed and hollow like the womb of heaven,
But black for shining, and with death for life
Big now to birth and ripe with child, full-blown
With fear and fruit of havoc, takes the sun
Out of our eyes, darkening the day, and blinds
The fair sky's face unseasonably with change,
A cloud in one and billow of battle, a surge
High reared as heaven with monstrous surf of spears
That shake on us their shadow, till men's heads

Bend, and their hearts even with its forward wind
Wither, so blasts all seed in them of hope
Its breath and blight of presage; yea, even now
The winter of this wind out of the deeps
Makes cold our trust in comfort of the gods,
And blinds our eye toward outlook; yet not here,
Here never shall the Thracian plant on high
For ours his father's symbol, nor with wreaths
A strange folk wreathe it, upright set and crowned
Here where our natural people born behold
The golden Gorgon of the shield's defence
That screens their flowering olive, nor strange gods
Be graced, and Pallas here have praise no more.
And if this be not I must give my child,
Thee, mine own very blood and spirit of mine,
Thee to be slain. Turn from me, turn thine eyes
A little from me: I can bear not yet
To see if still they smile on mine or no,
If fear make faint the light in them, or faith
Fix them as stars of safety. Need have we,
Sore need of stars that set not in mid storm,
Lights that outlast the lightnings; yet my heart
Endures not to make proof of thine or these,
Not yet to know thee whom I made, and bare
What manner of woman: had I borne thee man,
I had made no question of thine eyes or heart,
Nor spared to read the scriptures in them writ,
Wert thou my son; yet couldst thou then but die,
Fallen in sheer fight by chance and charge of spears,
And have no more of memory, fill no tomb
More famous than thy fellows in fair field,
Where many share the grave, many the praise;
But one crown shall one only girl my child
Wear, dead for this dear city, and give back life
To him that gave her and to me that bare,
And save two sisters living; and all this,
Is this not all good? I shall give thee, child,
Thee but by fleshly nature mine, to bleed
For dear land's love; but if the city fall
What part is left me in my children then?
But if it stand, and thou for it lie dead,
Then hast thou in it a better part than we,
A holier portion than we all; for each
Hath but the length of his own life to live,
And this most glorious mother-land on earth
To worship till that life have end: but thine
Hath end no more than hers; thou, dead, shalt live
Till Athens live not; for the days and nights
Given of thy bare brief dark dividual life,
Shall she give thee half all her age long own
And all its glory; for thou givest her these;
But with one hand she takes, and gives again
More than I gave, or she requires of thee.
Come therefore, I will make thee fit for death;
I that could give thee, dear, no gift at birth
Save of light life that breathes and bleeds, even I

Will help thee to this better gift than mine,
And lead thee by this little living hand,
That death shall make so strong, to that great end
Whence it shall lighten like a god's, and strike
Dead the strong heart of battle that would break
Athens; but ye, pray for this land, old men,
That it may bring forth never child on earth
To love it less, for none may more, than we.
Chorus. Out of the north wind grief came forth,
And the shining of a sword out of the sea.
Yea, of old the first-blown blast blew the prelude of this last,
The blast of his trumpet upon Rhodope.
Out of the north skies full of his cloud,
With the clamor of his storms as of a crowd
At the wheels of a great king crying aloud,
At the axle of a strong king's car
That has girded on the girdle of war, —
With hands that lightened the skies in sunder,
And feet whose fall was followed of thunder,
A god, a great god strange of name,
With horse-yoke fleeter-hoofed than flame,
To the mountain bed of a maiden came,
Oreithyia, the bride mismated,
Wofully wed in a snow-strewn bed
With a bridegroom that kisses the bride's mouth dead;
Without garland, without glory, without song,
As a fawn by night on the hills belated,
Given over for a spoil unto the strong.
From lips how pale so keen a wail
At the grasp of a god's hand on her she gave,
When his breath that darkens air made a havoc of her hair,
It rang from the mountain even to the wave, —
Rang with a cry, *Woe's me, woe is me!*
From the darkness upon Hæmus to the sea;
And with hands that clung to her new lord's knee,
As a virgin overborne with shame,
She besought him by her spouseless fame,
By the blameless breasts of a maid unmarried
And locks unmaidenly rent and harried,
And all her flower of body, born
To match the maidenhood of morn,
With the might of the wind's wrath wrenched and torn.
Vain, all vain as a dead man's vision
Falling by night in his old friend's sight,
To be scattered with slumber and slain ere light;
Such a breath of such a bridegroom in that hour
Of her prayers made mock, of her fears derision,
And a ravage of her youth as of a flower.
With a leap of his limbs as a lion's, a cry from his lips as of thunder,
In a storm of amorous godhead filled with fire,
From the height of the heaven that was rent with the roar of his coming in sunder,
Sprang the strong god on the spoil of his desire.
And the pines of the hills were as green reeds shattered,
And their branches as buds of the soft spring scattered,
And the west wind and east, and the sound of the south,
Fell dumb at the blast of the north wind's mouth,
At the cry of his coming out of heaven.
And the wild beasts quailed in the rifts and hollows
Where hound nor clarion of huntsman follows,
And the depths of the sea were aghast, and whitened,
And the crowns of their waves were as flame that lightened,

And the heart of the floods thereof was riven.
ut she knew not him coming for terror, she felt not her wrong that he wrought her,
When her locks as leaves were shed before his breath,
nd she heard not for terror his prayer, though the cry was a god's that besought her,
Blown from lips that strew the world-wide seas with death.
For the heart was molten within her to hear,
And her knees beneath her were loosened for fear,
And her blood fast bound as a frost-bound water,
And the soft new bloom of the green earth's daughter
Wind-wasted as blossom of a tree;
As the wild god rapt her from earth's breast lifted,
n the strength of the stream of his dark breath drifted,
rom the bosom of earth as a bride from the mother,
/ith storm for bridesman and wreck for brother,
As a cloud that he sheds upon the sea.

Of this hoary-headed woe
Song made memory long ago;
Now a younger grief to mourn
Needs a new song younger born.
Who shall teach our tongues to reach
What strange height of saddest speech,
For the new bride's sake that is given to be
A stay to fetter the foot of the sea,
Lest it quite spurn down and trample the town,
Ere the violets be dead that were plucked for its crown,
Or its olive-leaf whiten and wither?
Who shall say of the wind's way
That he journeyed yesterday,
Or the track of the storm that shall sound to-morrow,
If the new be more than the gray-grown sorrow?
For the wind of the green first season was keen,
And the blast shall be sharper than blew between
That the breath of the sea blows hither.

Herald of Eumolpus. Old men, gray borderers on the march of death,
Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sinewy speech,
Else nerveless, from no crew of such faint folk
Whose tongues are stouter than their hands come I
To bid not you to battle: let them strike
Whose swords are sharper than your keen-tongued wail,
And ye, sit fast and sorrow; but what man
Of all this land-folk and earth-laboring herd
For heart or hand seems foremost, him I call,
If heart be his to hearken, him bid forth
To try if one be in the sun's sight born
Of all that grope and grovel on dry ground
That may join hands in battle-grip for death
With them whose seed and strength is of the sea.

Chorus. Know thou this much for all thy loud blast blown,
We lack not hands to speak with, swords to plead,
For proof of peril, not of boisterous breath,
Sea-wind and storm of barren mouths that foam
And rough rock's edge of menace; and short space
May lessen thy large ignorance, and inform
This insolence with knowledge if there live
Men earth-begotten of no tenderer thews
Than knit the great joints of the grim sea's brood
With hasps of steel together; heaven to help,

One man shall break, even on their own flood's verge,
That iron bulk of battle; but thine eye
That sees it now swell higher than sand or shore
Haply shall see not when thine host shall shrink.

Herald of Eumolpus. Not haply, nay, but surely, shall not thine.

Chorus. That lot shall no god give who fights for thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Shall gods bear bit and bridle, fool, of men?

Chorus. Nor them forbid we, nor shalt thou constrain.

Herald of Eumolpus. Yet say'st thou none shall make the good lot mine?

Chorus. Of thy side none, nor moved for fear of thee.

Herald of Eumolpus. Gods hast thou then to baffle gods of ours?

Chorus. Nor thine nor mine, but equal-souled are they.

Herald of Eumolpus. Toward good and ill, then, equal-eyed of soul?

Chorus. Nay, but swift-eyed to note where ill thoughts breed.

Herald of Eumolpus. Thy shaft word-feathered flies yet far of me.

Chorus. Pride knows not, wounded, till the heart be cleft.

Herald of Eumolpus. No shaft wounds deep whose wing is plumed with words.

Chorus. Lay that to heart, and bid thy tongue learn grace.

Herald of Eumolpus. Grace shall thine own crave soon too late of mine.

Chorus. Boast thou till then, but I wage words no more.

Erechtheus. Man, what shrill wind of speech and wrangling air
Blows in our ears a summons from thy lips
Winged with what message, or what gift or grace
Requiring? none but what his hand may take
Here may the foe think hence to reap, nor this
Except some doom from Godward yield it him.

Herald of Eumolpus. King of this land-folk, by my mouth to thee
Thus saith the son of him that shakes thine earth,
Eumolpus; now the stakes of war are set,
For land or sea to win by throw and wear;
Choose therefore or to quit thy side, and give
The palm unfought for to his bloodless hand,
Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot
Whose tramp far off makes tremble for pure fear
Thy soul-struck mother, piercing like a sword
The immortal womb that bare thee; by the waves
That no man bridles, and that bound thy world,
And by the winds and storms of all the sea,
He swears to raze from eyeshot of the sun
This city named not of his father's name,
And wash to deathward down one flood of doom
This whole fresh brood of earth yeaned naturally,
Green yet and faint in its first blade, unblown
With yellow hope of harvest: so do thou,
Seeing whom thy time is come to meet, for fear
Yield, or gird up thy force to fight and die.

Erechtheus. To fight then be it; for if to die or live,
No man but only a god knows this much yet,
Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in our hands
The weapons not the fortunes of our fight;
For these now rest as lots that yet undrawn
Lie in the lap of the unknown hour; but this
I know, not thou, whose hollow mouth of storm

Is but a warlike wind, a sharp salt breath
That bites and wounds not; death nor life of mine
Shall give to death or lordship of strange kings
The soul of this live city, nor their heel
Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor snaffle or goad
Wound her free mouth or stain her sanguine side
Yet masterless of man; so bid thy lord
Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too late
Gnash teeth that could not fasten on her flesh,
And foam his life out in dark froth of blood
Vain as a wind's waif of the loud-mouthed sea,
Torn from the wave's edge whitening. Tell him this;
Though thrice his might were mustered for our scathe
And thicker set with fence of thorn-edged spears
Than sands are whirled about the wintering beach
When storms have swoln the rivers, and their blasts
Have breached the broad sea-banks with stress of sea,
That waves of inland and the main make war
As men that mix and grapple; though his ranks
Were more to number than all wild-wood leaves
The wind waves on the hills of all the world,
Yet should the heart not faint, the head not fall,
The breath not fail, of Athens. Say, the gods
From lips that have no more on earth to say
Have told thee this the last good news or ill
That I shall speak in sight of earth and sun
Or he shall hear and see them: for the next
That ear of his from tongue of mine may take
Must be the first word spoken under-ground
From dead to dead in darkness. Hence; make haste,
Lest war's fleet foot be swifter than thy tongue,
And I that part not to return again
On him that comes not to depart away
Be fallen before thee; for the time is full,
And with such mortal hope as knows not fear
I go this high last way to the end of all.

Chorus. Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them,
Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame?
Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall slacken tears nor hasten them,
Till grief be within him as a burnt-out flame;
Till the passion be broken in his breast,
And the might thereof molten into rest,
And the rain of eyes that weep be dry,
And the breath be stilled of lips that sigh.
Death at last for all men is a harbor; yet they flee from it,
Set sails to the storm-wind, and again to sea;
Yet for all their labor no whit further shall they be from it,
Nor longer, but wearier, shall their life's work be.
And with anguish of travail until night
Shall they steer into shipwreck out of sight,
And with oars that break and shrouds that strain
Shall they drive whence no ship steers again.
Bitter and strange is the word of the god most high,
And steep the strait of his way.

Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow the light that gleams
On the faces of men falls faint as the dawn of dreams,
The dayspring of death as a star in an under sky
Where night is the dead men's day.
As darkness and storm is his will that on earth is done,
As a cloud is the face of his strength.
King of kings, holiest of holies, and mightiest of might,
Lord of the lords of thine heaven that are humble in thy sight,
Hast thou set not an end for the path of the fires of the sun,
To appoint him a rest at length?
Hast thou told not by measure the waves of the waste wide sea,
And the ways of the wind their master and thrall to thee?
Hast thou filled not the furrows with fruit for the world's increase?
Has thine ear not heard from of old, or thine eye not read
The thought and the deed of us living, the doom of us dead?
Hast thou made not war upon earth, and again made peace?
Therefore, O father, that seest us whose lives are a breath,
Take off us thy burden, and give us not wholly to death.
For lovely is life, and the law wherein all things live,
And gracious the season of each, and the hour of its kind,
And precious the seed of his life in a wise man's mind;
But all save life for his life will a base man give.
But a life that is given for the life of the whole live land,
From a heart unspotted a gift of a spotless hand,
Of pure will perfect and free, for the land's life's sake,
What man shall fear not to put forth his hand and take?
For the fruit of a sweet life plucked in its pure green prime
On his hand who plucks is as blood, on his soul as crime.
With cursing ye buy not blessing, nor peace with strife,
And the hand is hateful that chaffers with death for life.
Hast thou heard, O my heart, and endurest
The word that is said,
What a garland by sentence found surest
Is wrought for what head?
With what blossomless flowerage of sea-foam and blood-colored foliage inwound
It shall crown as a heifer's for slaughter the forehead for marriage uncrowned?
How the veils and the wreaths that should cover
The brows of the bride
Shall be shed by the breath of what lover,
And scattered aside?
With a blast of the mouth of what bridegroom the crowns shall be cast from her hair,
And her head by what altar made humble be left of them naked and bare?
At a shrine unbeloved of a god unbeholden a gift shall be given for the land,
That its ramparts though shaken with clamor and horror of manifold waters may stand;
That the crests of its citadels crowned and its turrets that thrust up their heads to the sun
May behold him unblinded with darkness of waves overmastering their bulwarks begun.
As a bride shall they bring her, a prey for the bridegroom, a flower for the couch of her lord;
They shall muffle her mouth that she cry not or curse them, and cover her eyes from the sword.
They shall fasten her lips as with bit and with bridle, and darken the light of her face,
That the soul of the slayer may not falter, his heart be not molten, his hand give not grace.

If she weep then, yet may none that
hear take pity;
If she cry not, none should hearken
though she cried.
Shall a virgin shield thine head for
love, O city,
With a virgin's blood anointed as
for pride?
Yet we held thee dear and hallowed
of her favor,
Dear of all men held thy people
to her heart;
Nought she loves the breath of blood,
the sanguine savor,
Who hath built with us her throne
and chosen her part.

Bloodless are her works, and
sweet
All the ways that feel her feet;
From the empire of her eyes
Light takes life, and darkness flies;
From the harvest of her hands
Wealth strikes root in prosperous
lands;
Wisdom of her word is made;
At her strength is strength afraid;
From the beam of her bright spear
War's fleet foot goes back for fear;
In her shrine she reared the birth
Fire-begotten on live earth;
Glory from her helm was shed
On his olive-shadowed head;
By no hand but his shall she
Scourge the storms back of the sea,
To no fame but his shall give
Grace, being dead, with hers to
live,
And in double name divine
Half the godhead of their shrine.
: now with what word, with what
woe may we meet
e timeless passage of piteous feet,
her that bend to the last way's end
They shall walk upon earth?
at song be rolled for a bride black-
stoled
d the mother whose hand of her
hand hath hold?
anguish of heart is my soul's
strength broken,
d the tongue sealed fast that would
fain have spoken,

To behold thee, O child of so bitter a
birth
That we counted so sweet,
What way thy steps to what bride-
feast tend,
What gift he must give that shall wed
thee for token
If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.
Chthonia. People, old men of my
city, lordly wise and hoar of head,
I, a spouseless bride, and crownless but
with garlands of the dead,
From the fruitful light turn silent to
my dark unchilded bed.
Chorus. Wise of word was he too
surely, but with deadlier wisdom
wise,
First who gave thee name from under
earth, no breath from upper skies,
When, foredoomed to this day's dark-
ness, their first daylight filled
thine eyes.
Praxithea. Child, my child that wast,
and art but death's and now no
more of mine,
Half my heart is cloven with anguish
by the sword made sharp for
thine,
Half exalts its wing for triumph, that
I bare thee thus divine.
Chthonia. Though for me the sword's
edge thirst that sets no point
against thy breast,
Mother, O my mother, where I drank
of life and fell on rest,
Thine, not mine, is all the grief that
marks this hour accurst and
blest.
Chorus. Sweet thy sleep and sweet
the bosom was that gave thee
sleep and birth;
Harder now the breast, and girded with
no marriage-band for girth,
Where thine head shall sleep, the name-
child of the lords of under earth.
Praxithea. Dark the name and dark
the gifts they gave thee, child, in
childbirth were,
Sprung from him that rent the womb
of earth, a bitter seed to bear,
Born with groanings of the ground that
gave him way toward heaven's
dear air.

Chthonia. Day to day makes answer,
first to last, and life to death;
but I,
Born for death's sake, die for life's
sake, if indeed this be to die,
This my doom that seals me deathless
till the springs of time run dry.
Chorus. Children shalt thou bear to
memory, that to man shalt bring
forth none;
Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and
hearts and songs to meet the
sun,
Names to fire men's ears like music till
the round world's race be run.
Praxithea. I thy mother, named of
gods that wreak revenge and
brand with blame,
Now for thy love shall be loved as thou,
and famous with thy fame,
While this city's name on earth shall
be for earth her mightiest name.
Chthonia. That I may give this poor
girl's blood of mine
Scarce yet sun-warmed with summer,
this thin life
Still green with flowerless growth of
seedling days,
To build again my city; that no drop
Fallen of these innocent veins on the
cold ground
But shall help knit the joints of her
firm walls
To knead the stones together, and
make sure
The band about her maiden girdlestead
Once fastened, and of all men's violent
hands
Inviolable forever, — these to me
Were no such gifts as crave no thanks-
giving,
If with one blow dividing the sheer
life
I might make end, and one pang wind
up all,
And seal mine eyes from sorrow; for
such end
The gods give none they love not; but
my heart,
That leaps up lightened of all sloth or
fear
To take the sword's point, yet with one
thought's load
Flags, and falls back, broken of wing
that halts
Maimed in mid flight for thy sake, an
borne down,
Mother, that in the places where
played
An arm's-length from thy bosom an
no more
Shalt find me never, nor thine eye wa
glad
To mix with mine its eyesight, and fo
love
Laugh without word, filled with swee
light, and speak
Divine dumb things of the inwar
spirit and heart,
Moved silently; nor hand or lip again
Touch hand or lip of either, but fo
mine
Shall thine meet only shadows of swif
night,
Dreams and dead thoughts of dea
things; and the bed
Thou strewedst, a sterile place for al
time, strewn
For my sleep only, with its void sa
sheets
Shall vex thee, and the unfruitful cove
lid
For empty days reproach me dead, tha
leave
No profit of my body, but am gone
As not one worth being born to bea
no seed,
A sapless stock and branchless; ye
thy womb
Shall want not honor of me, tha
brought forth
For all this people freedom, and fo
earth
From the unborn city born out of m
blood
To light the face of all men eve
more
Glory; but lay thou this to thy grea
heart
Whereunder in the dark of birth co
ceived
Mine unlit life lay girdled with th
zone
That bound thy bridal bosom; set th
thought
Against all edge of evil as a sword

beat back sorrow, that for all the world
ou brought'st me forth a savior, who shall save
hens; for none but I, from none but thee,
all take this death for garland; and the men
ne unknown children of unsounded years,
sons unrisen shall rise up at thine hand,
wn of thy seed to bring forth seed to thee,
d call thee most of all most fruitful found
essed; but me too for my barren womb,
ore than my sisters for their children born,
all these give honor, yea in scorn's own place
all men set love, and bring for mockery praise,
d thanks for curses; for the dry wild vine,
offed at and cursed of all men, that was I,
all shed them wine to make the world's heart warm,
at all eyes seeing may lighten, and all ears
ar and be kindled; such a draught to drink
all be the blood that bids this dust bring forth,
e chaliced life here spilt on this mine earth,
ne, my great father's mother; whom I pray
ke me now gently, tenderly take home,
d softly lay in his my cold chaste hand
o is called of men by my name, being of gods
arged only and chosen to bring men under earth,
d now must lead and stay me with his staff,
silent soul led of a silent god,
ward sightless things led sightless; and on earth
I see now but the shadow of mine end,
And this last light of all for me in heaven.

Praxithea. Farewell I bid thee; so bid thou not me,
Lest the gods hear and mock us: yet on these
I lay the weight not of this grief, nor cast
Ill words for ill deeds back; for if one say
They have done men wrong, what hurt have they to hear,
Or he what help to have said it? surely, child,
If one among men born might say it and live
Blameless, none more than I may, who being vexed
Hold yet my peace; for now through tears enough
Mine eyes have seen the sun that from this day
Thine shall see never more; and in the night
Enough has blown of evil, and mine ears
With wail enough the winds have filled, and brought
Too much of cloud from over the sharp sea
To mar for me the morning; such a blast
Rent from these wide void arms and helpless breast
Long since one graft of me disbranched, and bore
Beyond the wild ways of the unwandered world,
And loud wastes of the thunder-throated sea,
Springs of the night and openings of the heaven,
The old garden of the Sun; whence never-more
From west or east shall winds bring back that blow
From folds of opening heaven or founts of night
The flower of mine once ravished, born my child
To bear strange children; nor on wings of theirs

Shall comfort come back to me, nor their sire
Breathe help upon my peril, nor his strength
Raise up my weakness; but of gods and men
I drift unsteered on ruin, and the wave
Darkens my head with imminent height, and hangs
Dumb, filled too full with thunder that shall leave
These ears death-deafened when the tide finds tongue,
And all its wrath bears on them; thee, O child,
I help not, nor am holpen; fain, ah fain,
More than was ever mother born of man,
Were I to help thee; fain beyond all prayer,
Beyond all thought fain to redeem thee, torn
More timeless from me sorrowing than the dream
That was thy sister; so shalt thou be too,
Thou but a vision, shadow-shaped of sleep,
By grief made out of nothing; now but once
I touch, but once more hold thee, one more kiss
This last time, and none other ever more,
Leave on thy lips, and leave them. Go. Thou wast
My heart, my heart's blood, life-blood of my life,
My child, my nursling: now this breast once thine
Shall rear again no children; never now
Shall any mortal blossom born like thee
Lie there, nor ever with small silent mouth
Draw the sweet springs dry for an hour that feed
The blind blithe life that knows not; never head
Rest here to make these cold veins warm, nor eye
Laugh itself open with the lips that reach
Lovingly toward a fount more loving; these
Death makes as all good lesser things now dead,
And all the latter hopes that flowered from these,
And fall as these fell fruitless; no joy more
Shall man take of thy maidenhood, no tongue
Praise it; no good shall eyes get more of thee
That lightened for thy love's sake. Now, take note,
Give ear, O all ye people, that my word
May pierce your hearts through, and the stroke that cleaves
Be fruitful to them; so shall all that hear
Grow great at heart with child of thought most high,
And bring forth seed in season; this my child,
This flower of this my body, this sweet life,
This fair live youth I give you, to be slain,
Spent, shed, poured out, and perish; take my gift,
And give it death and the under gods who crave
So much for that they give; for this is more,
Much more is this than all we; for they give
Freedom, and for a blast, an air of breath,
A little soul that is not, they give back
Light for all eyes, cheer for all hearts, and life
That fills the world's width full of fame and praise
And mightier love than children's. This they give,
The grace to make thy country great, and wrest
From time and death power to take hold on her,
And strength to scathe forever; and this gift,

this no more than man's love is or mine,
ine and all mothers'? nay, where that seems more,
'here one loves life of child, wife, father, friend,
on, husband, mother, more than this, even there
re all these lives worth nothing, all loves else
'ith this love slain and buried, and their tomb
thing for shame to spit on; for what love
ath a slave left to love with? or the heart
ase-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,
'hat should it do to love thee? what hath he,
ne man that hath no country? Gods nor men
ave such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,
le, fruitless, grovelling at the foot of death,
ndless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,
nchilded and unmothered, abject limbs
nat breed things abject; but who loves on earth
ot friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,
or loves his own life for his own land's sake,
t only this thing most, more this than all,
e loves all well, and well of all is loved,
nd this love lives forever. See now, friends,
y countrymen, my brothers, with what heart
ive you this that of your hands again
e gods require for Athens: as I give, give ye to them what their hearts would have
ho shall give back things better; yea, and these
ake for me to witness, all these gods,
ere their great will more grievous than it is,
Not one but three, for this one thin-spun thread
A threefold band of children would I give
For this land's love's sake; for whose love to-day
I bid thee, child, fare deathward and farewell.

Chorus. O wofullest of women, yet of all
Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time
Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues
High things be spoken of thee; for such grace
The gods have dealt to no man, that on none
Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day
Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood,
And in thy fate no lowlier than a god
In all good things and evil; such a name
Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own
Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth
Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.

Chthonia. O city, O glory of Athens, O crown of my father's land, farewell.

Chorus. For welfare is given her of thee.

Chthonia. O goddess, be good to thy people, that in them dominion and freedom may dwell.

Chorus. Turn from us the strengths of the sea.

Chthonia. Let glory's and theirs be one name in the mouths of all nations made glad with the sun.

Chorus. For the cloud is blown back with thy breath.

Chthonia. With the long last love of mine eyes I salute thee, O land where my days now are done.

Chorus. But her life shall be born of thy death.

Chthonia. I put on me the darkness thy shadow, my mother, and symbol, O Earth, of my name.

Chorus. For thine was her witness from birth.
Chthonia. In thy likeness I come to thee darkling, a daughter whose dawn and her even are the same.
Chorus. Be thine heart to her gracious, O Earth!
Chthonia. To thine own kind be kindly, for thy son's name's sake.
Chorus. That sons unborn may praise thee and thy first-born son.
Chthonia. Give me thy sleep, who give thee all my life awake.
Chorus. Too swift a sleep, ere half the web of day be spun.
Chthonia. Death brings the shears or ever life wind up the weft.
Chorus. Their edge is ground and sharpened: who shall stay his hand?
Chthonia. The woof is thin, a small short life, with no thread left.
Chorus. Yet hath it strength, stretched out, to shelter all the land.
Chthonia. Too frail a tent for covering, and a screen too strait.
Chorus. Yet broad enough for buckler shall thy sweet life be.
Chthonia. A little bolt to bar off battle from the gate.
Chorus. A wide sea-wall, that shatters the besieging sea.
Chthonia. I lift up mine eyes from the skirts of the shadow,
From the border of death to the limits of light;
O streams and rivers of mountain and meadow
That hallow the last of my sight,
O father that wast of my mother,
Cephisus, O thou too his brother
From the bloom of whose banks as a prey
Winds harried my sister away,
O crown on the world's head lying
Too high for its waters to drown,
Take yet this one word of me dying,
O city, O crown!
Though land-wind and sea-wind with mouths that blow slaughter
Should gird them to battle against thee again,
New-born of the blood of a maiden thy daughter,
The rage of their breath shall be vain.
For their strength shall be quenched and made idle,
And the foam of their mouths find a bridle,
And the height of their heads bow down
At the foot of the towers of the town.
Be blest and beloved as I love thee
Of all that shall draw from thee breath;
Be thy life as the sun's is above thee:
I go to my death.
Chorus. Many loves of many a mood and many a kind
Fill the life of man, and mould the secret mind;
Many days bring many dooms, to loose and bind;
Sweet is each in season, good the gift it brings,
Sweet as change of night and day with altering wings,
Night that lulls world-weary day, day that comforts night,
Night that fills our eyes with sleep, day that fills with light.
None of all is lovelier, loftier love is none,
Less is bride's for bridegroom, mother's less for son,
Child, than this that crowns and binds up all in one;
Love of thy sweet light, thy fostering breast and hand,
Mother Earth, and city chosen, and natural land;
Hills that bring the strong streams forth, heights of heavenlier air,
Fields aflower with winds and suns, woods with shadowing hair.
But none of the nations of men shall they liken to thee,
Whose children true-born and the fruit of thy body are we.
The rest are thy sons but in figure, in word are thy seed;
We only the flower of thy travail, thy children indeed.

Of thy soil hast thou fashioned our limbs, of thy waters their blood,
And the life of thy springs everlasting is fount of our flood.
No wind oversea blew us hither adrift on thy shore,
None sowed us by land in thy womb that conceived us and bore.
But the stroke of the shaft of the sunlight that brought us to birth
Pierced only and quickened thy furrows to bear us, O Earth!
With the beams of his love wast thou cloven as with iron or fire,
And the life in thee yearned for his life, and grew great with desire.
And the hunger and thirst to be wounded and healed with his dart
Made fruitful the love in thy veins and the depth of thine heart.
And the showers out of heaven overflowing and liquid with love
Fulfilled thee with child of his godhead as rain from above.
Such desire had ye twain of each other, till molten in one
We might bear and beget of your bodies the fruits of the sun.
And the trees in their season brought forth and were kindled anew
By the warmth of the moisture of marriage, the child-bearing dew.
And the firstlings were fair of the wedlock of heaven and of earth;
All countries were bounteous with blossom and bourgeon of birth,
Green pastures of grass for all cattle, and life-giving corn;
But here of thy bosom, here only, the man-child was born.
All races but one are as aliens ingrafted or sown,
Strange children and changelings; but we, O our mother, thine own.
Thy nurslings are others, and seedlings they know not of whom;
Or these hast thou fostered, but us thou hast borne in thy womb.
Who is he of us all, O beloved, that owe thee for birth,
Who would give not his blood for his birth's sake, O mother, O Earth?

What landsman is he that was fostered and reared of thine hand
Who may vaunt him as we may in death though he die for the land?

Well doth she therefore who gives thee in guerdon
The bloom of the life of thy giving;
And thy body was bowed by no fruitless burden,
That bore such fruit of thee living.
For her face was not darkened for fear,
For her eyelids conceived not a tear,
Nor a cry from her lips craved pity;
But her mouth was a fountain of song,
And her heart as a citadel strong
That guards the heart of the city
Messenger. High things of strong-souled men that loved their land
On brass and stone are written, and their deeds
On high days chanted; but none graven or sung
That ever set men's eyes or spirits on fire,
Athenians, has the sun's height seen, or earth
Heard in her depth reverberate as from heaven,
More worth men's praise and good report of gods
Than here I bring for record in your ears.
For now being come to the altar, where as priest
Death ministering should meet her, and his hand
Seal her sweet eyes asleep, the maiden stood,
With light in all her face as of a bride
Smiling, or shine of festal flame by night
Far flung from towers of triumph; and her lips
Trembled with pride in pleasure, that no fear
Blanched them nor death before his time drank dry
The blood whose bloom fulfilled them; for her cheeks
Lightened, and brighter than a bridal veil

Her hair enrobed her bosom, and enrolled
From face to feet the body's whole soft length
As with a cloud sun-saturate; then she spake
With maiden tongue words manlike, but her eyes
Lit mildly like a maiden's: *Countrymen,*
With more good-will and height of happier heart
I give me to you than my mother bare,
And go more gladly this great way to death
Than young men bound to battle. Then with face
Turned to the shadowiest part of all the shrine,
And eyes fast set upon the further shade,
Take me, dear gods; and as some form had shone
From the deep hollow shadow, some god's tongue
Answered, *I bless you that your guardian grace*
Gives me to guard this country, takes my blood,
Your child's by name, to heal it. Then the priest
Set to the flower-sweet snow of her soft throat
The sheer knife's edge that severed it, and loosed
From the fair bondage of so spotless flesh
So strong a spirit; and all that girt them round,
Gazing, with souls that hung on that sad stroke,
Groaned, and kept silence after while a man
Might count how far the fresh blood crept, and bathed
How deep the dark robe and the bright shrine's base
Red-rounded with a running ring that grew
More large and duskier as the wells that fed
Were drained of that pure effluence. But the queen
Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but as a dream
Floats out of eyes awakening, so passed forth
Ghost-like, a shadow of sorrow, from all sight,
To the inner court and chamber where she sits
Dumb, till word reach her of this whole day's end.

Chorus. More hapless born by far
Beneath some wintrier star,
One sits in stone among high Lydian snows,
The tomb of her own woes:
Yet happiest was once of the daughters of gods, and divine by her sire and her lord,
Ere her tongue was a shaft for the hearts of her sons, for the heart of her husband a sword.
For she, too great of mind,
Grown through her good things blind,
With godless lips and fire of her own breath
Spake all her house to death;
But thou, no mother unmothered, nor kindled in spirit with pride of thy seed,
Thou hast hallowed thy child for a blameless blood-offering, and ransomed thy race by thy deed.

Messenger. As flower is graffed on flower, so grief on grief
Engraffed brings forth new blossoms of strange tears,
Fresh buds and green fruits of an alien pain;
For now flies rumor on a dark wide wing,
Murmuring of woes more than ye knew, most like
Hers whom ye hailed most wretched; for the twain
Last left of all this house that wore last night
A threefold crown of maidens, and today
Should let but one fall dead out of the wreath,
If mad with grief we know not, and sore love

or this their sister, or with shame soul-stung
o outlive her dead, or doubt lest their lives too
ne gods require to seal their country safe,
nd bring the oracular doom to perfect end,
ave slain themselves, and fallen at the altar-foot
e by their own hands done to death; and fear
akes all the city as winds a wintering tree,
nd as dead leaves are men's hearts blown about
nd shrunken with ill thoughts, and flowerless hopes
rched up with presage, lest the piteous blood
ed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix
n this land's forehead like a curse that cleaves
o the unclean soul's inexpiate hunted head
hom his own crime tracks hotlier than a hound
o life's veiled end unsleeping; and this hour
ow blackens toward the battle that must close
l gates of hope and fear on all their hearts
ho tremble toward its issue, knowing not yet
blood may buy them surety, cleanse or soil
e helpless hands men raise, and reach no stay.

Chorus. Ill thoughts breed fear, and fear ill words; but these
e gods turn from us that have kept their law.
Let us lift up the strength of our hearts in song,
And our souls to the height of the darkling day.
If the wind in our eyes blow blood for spray,
Be the spirit that breathes in us life more strong,
Though the prow reel round, and the helm point wrong,
And sharp reefs whiten the shoreward way.
For the steersman Time sits hidden astern,
With dark hand plying the rudder of doom,
And the surf-smoke under it flies like fume
As the blast shears off and the oar-blades churn
The foam of our lives that to death return,
Blown back as they break to the gulfing gloom.
What cloud upon heaven is arisen, what shadow, what sound,
From the world beyond earth, from the night underground,
That scatters from wings unbeholden the weight of its darkness around?
For the sense of my spirit is broken, and blinded its eye,
As the soul of a sick man ready to die,
With fear of the hour that is on me, with dread if an end be not nigh.
O Earth, O gods of the land, have ye heart now to see and to hear
What slays with terror mine eyesight, and seals mine ear?
O fountains of streams everlasting, are all ye not shrunk up and withered for fear?
Lo, night is arisen on the noon, and her hounds are in quest by day,
And the world is fulfilled of the noise of them crying for their prey,
And the sun's self stricken in heaven and cast out of his course as a blind man astray.
From east to west of the south sea-line,
Glitters the lightning of spears that shine;
As a storm-cloud swoln that comes up from the skirts of the sea,
By the wind for helmsman to shoreward ferried,
So black behind them the live storm serried
Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot, and the terror to be.

Shall the sea give death whom the land gave birth?
O Earth, fair mother, O sweet live Earth,
Hide us again in thy womb from the waves of it, help us or hide.
As a sword is the heart of the god thy brother,
But thine as the heart of a new-made mother,
To deliver thy sons from his ravin, and rage of his tide.
O strong north wind, the pilot of cloud and rain,
For the gift we gave thee what gift hast thou given us again?
O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a terror to forth-faring ships by night,
What bride-song is this that is blown on the blast of thy breath?
A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a song but of death,
For the bride's folk weeping, and woe for her father, who finds thee against him in fight.
Turn back from us, turn thy battle, take heed of our cry;
Let thy dread breath sound, and the waters of war be dry;
Let thy strong wrath shatter the strength of our foemen, the sword of their strength and the shield;
As vapors in heaven, or as waves or the wrecks of ships,
So break thou the ranks of their spears with the breath of thy lips,
Till their corpses have covered and clothed as with raiment the face of the sword-ploughed field.
O son of the rose-red morning, O god twin-born with the day,
O wind with the young sun waking, and winged for the same wide way,
Give up not the house of thy kin to the host thou hast marshalled from northward for prey.
From the cold of thy cradle in Thrace, from the mists of the fountains of night,
From the bride-bed of dawn whence day leaps laughing, on fire for his flight,
Come down with their doom in thine hand on the ships thou hast brought up against us to fight.
For now not in word but in deed is the harvest of spears begun,
And its clamor outbellows the thunder, its lightning outlightens the sun.
From the springs of the morning it thunders and lightens across and afar
To the wave where the moonset ends, and the fall of the last low star.
With a trampling of drenched red hoofs and an earthquake of men that meet,
Strong War sets hand to the scythe, and the furrows take fire from his feet.
Earth groans from her great rent heart, and the hollows of rocks are afraid,
And the mountains are moved, and the valleys as waves in a storm-wind swayed.
From the roots of the hills to the plain's dim verge and the dark loud shore,
Air shudders with shrill spears crossing, and hurtling of wheels that roar.
As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of a lion that foam as they gnash,
Is the shriek of the axles that loosen, the shock of the poles that crash.
The dense manes darken and glitter, the mouths of the mad steeds champ,
Their heads flash blind through the battle, and death's foot rings in their tramp.
For a fourfold host upon earth and in heaven is arrayed for the fight,
Clouds ruining in thunder and armies encountering as clouds in the night.
Mine ears are amazed with the terror of trumpets, with darkness mine eyes,
At the sound of the sea's host charging that deafens the roar of the sky's.

White frontlet is dashed upon frontlet, and horse against horse reels hurled,
And the gorge of the gulfs of the battle is wide for the spoil of the world.
And the meadows are cumbered with shipwreck of chariots that founder on land,
And the horsemen are broken with breach as of breakers, and scattered as sand.
Through the roar and recoil of the charges that mingle their cries and confound,
Like fire are the notes of the trumpets that flash through the darkness of sound.
As the swing of the sea churned yellow that sways with the wind as it swells,
s the lift and relapse of the wave of the chargers that clash with their bells;
And the clang of the sharp shrill brass through the burst of the wave as it shocks
Rings clean as the clear winds cry through the roar of the surge on the rocks;
And the heads of the steeds in their headgear of war, and their corseleted breasts,
Gleam broad as the brows of the billows that brighten the storm with their crests,
Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave to the shipwrecking wind as they rise,
Filled full of the terror and thunder of water, that slays as it dies.
So dire is the glare of their foreheads, so fearful the fire of their breath,
And the light of their eyeballs enkindled so bright with the lightnings of death;
And the foam of their mouths as the sea's when the jaws of its gulf are as graves,
And the ridge of their necks as the wind-shaken mane on the ridges of waves;
And their fetlocks afire as they rear drip thick with a dewfall of blood
As the lips of the rearing breaker with froth of the man-slaying flood;
And the whole plain reels and resounds as the fields of the sea by night
When the stroke of the wind falls darkling, and death is the seafarer's light.

But thou, fair beauty of heaven, dear face of the day nigh dead,
What horror hath hidden thy glory, what hand hath muffled thine head?
O sun, with what song shall we call thee, or ward off thy wrath by what name,
With what prayer shall we seek to thee, soothe with what incense, assuage with what gift,
If thy light be such only as lightens to deathward the seaman adrift
With the fire of his house for a beacon, that foemen have wasted with flame?
Arise now, lift up thy light; give ear to us, put forth thine hand,
Reach toward us thy torch of deliverance, a lamp for the night of the land.
Thine eye is the light of the living, no lamp for the dead;
Oh, lift up the light of thine eye on the dark of our dread!
Who hath blinded thee? who hath prevailed on thee? who hath ensnared?
Who hath broken thy bow, and the shafts for thy battle prepared?
Have they found out a fetter to bind thee, a chain for thine arm that was bared?
Be the name of thy conqueror set forth, and the might of thy master declared.
O god, fair god of the morning, O glory of day,
What ails thee to cast from thy forehead its garland away?
To pluck from thy temples their chaplet enwreathed of the light,
And bind on the brows of thy godhead a frontlet of night?

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine horses, and goaded their flanks with affright,
To the race of a course that we know not, on ways that are hid from our sight.
As a wind through the darkness the wheels of their chariot are whirled,
And the light of its passage is night on the face of the world.
And there falls from the wings of thy glory no help from on high,
But a shadow that smites us with fear and desire of thine eye.
For our hearts are as reeds that a wind on the water bows down and goes by,
To behold not thy comfort in heaven that hath left us untimely to die.
But what light is it now leaps forth on the land
Enkindling the waters and ways of the air
From thy forehead made bare,
From the gleam of thy bow-bearing hand?
Hast thou set not thy right hand again to the string,
With the back-bowed horns bent sharp for a spring
And the barbed shaft drawn,
Till the shrill steel sing, and the tense nerve ring,
That pierces the heart of the dark with dawn,
O huntsman, O king,
When the flame of thy face hath twilight in chase
As a hound hath a blood-mottled fawn?
He has glanced into golden the gray sea-strands,
And the clouds are shot through with the fires of his hands,
And the height of the hollow of heaven that he fills
As the heart of a strong man is quickened and thrills;
High over the folds of the low-lying lands,
On the shadowless hills
As a guard on his watch-tower he stands.
All earth and all ocean, all depth and all height,
At the flash of an eyebeam are filled with his might:
The sea roars backward, the storm drops dumb,
And silence as dew on the fire of the fight
Falls kind in our ears as his face in our sight
With presage of peace to come.
Fresh hope in my heart from the ashes of dread
Leaps clear as a flame from the pyres of the dead,
That joy out of woe
May arise as the spring out of tempest and snow,
With the flower-feasted month in her hands rose-red
Borne soft as a babe from the bearing-bed.
Yet it knows not indeed if a god be friend,
If rescue may be from the rage of the sea,
Or the wrath of its lord have end.
For the season is full now of death or of birth,
To bring forth life, or an end of all;
And we know not if any thing stand or fall
That is girdled about with the round sea's girth
As a town with its wall;
But thou that art highest of the gods most high,
That art lord if we live, that art lord though we die,
Have heed of the tongues of our terror that cry
For a grace to the children of Earth.

Athenian Herald. Sons of Athens, heavy-laden with the holy weight of years,
Be your hearts as young men's lightened of their loathlier load of fears;
For the wave is sunk whose thunder shoreward shook the shuddering lands,
And unbreached of warring waters Athens like a sea-rock stands.

Chorus. Well thy word has cheered us, well thy face and glittering eyes, that spake
Ere thy tongue spake words of comfort; yet no pause behoves it make
Till the whole good hap find utterance that the gods have given at length.

Athenian Herald. All is this, that yet the city stands unforced by stranger strength.

Chorus. Sweeter sound might no mouth utter in man's ear than this thy word.

Athenian Herald. Feed thy soul then full of sweetness till some bitterer note be heard.

Chorus. None, if this ring sure, can mar the music fallen from heaven as rain.

Athenian Herald. If no fire of sun or star untimely sear the tender grain.

Chorus. Fresh the dewfall of thy tidings on our hopes reflowering lies.

Athenian Herald. Till a joyless shower and fruitless blight them, raining from thine eyes.

Chorus. Bitter springs have barren issues; these bedew grief's arid sands.

Athenian Herald. Such thank-offerings ask such altars as expect thy suppliant hands.

Chorus. Tears for triumph, wail for welfare, what strange godhead's shrine requires?

Athenian Herald. Death's or victory's be it, a funeral torch feeds all its festal fires.

Chorus. Like a star should burn the beacon flaming from our city's head.

Athenian Herald. Like a balefire should the flame go up that says the king is dead.

Chorus. Out of heaven, a wild-haired meteor, shoots this new sign, scattering fear.

Athenian Herald. Yea, the word has wings of fire that hovered, loath to burn thine ear.

Chorus. From thy lips it leapt forth loosened on a shrill and shadowy wing.

Athenian Herald. Long they faltered, fain to hide it deep as death that hides the king.

Chorus. Dead with him blind hope lies blasted by the lightning of one sword.

Athenian Herald. On thy tongue truth wars with error: no man's edge hath touched thy lord.

Chorus. False was thine then, jangling menace like a war-steed's brow-bound bell?

Athenian Herald. False it rang not joy nor sorrow; but by no man's hand he fell.

Chorus. Vainly then good news and evil through so faint a trumpet spake.

Athenian Herald. All too long thy soul yet labors, as who sleeping fain would wake,
Waking, fain would fall on sleep again; the woe thou knowest not yet,
When thou knowest, shall make thy memory thirst and hunger to forget.

Chorus. Long my heart has hearkened, hanging on thy clamorous ominous cry,
Fain yet fearful of the knowledge whence it looks to live or die;
Now to take the perfect presage of thy dark and sidelong flight
Comes a surer soothsayer sorrowing, sable-stoled as birds of night.

Praxithea. Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say,
Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip
Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

Athenian Herald. I have no will to weave too fine or far,
O queen, the weft of sweet with bitter speech,
Bright words with darkling; but the brief truth shown
Shall plead my pardon for a lingering tongue,

Loath yet to strike hope through the heart, and slay.
The sun's light still was lordly housed in heaven
When the twain fronts of war encountering smote
First fire out of the battle; but not long
Had the fresh wave of windy fight begun
Heaving, and all the surge of swords to sway,
When timeless night laid hold of heaven, and took
With its great gorge the noon as in a gulf,
Strangled; and thicker than the shrill-winged shafts
Flew the fleet lightnings, held in chase through heaven
By headlong heat of thunders on their trail
Loosed as on quest of quarry; that our host,
Smit with sick presage of some wrathful god,
Quailed, but the foe as from one iron throat
With one great sheer sole thousand-throated cry
Shook earth, heart-staggered from their shout, and clove
The eyeless hollow of heaven; and breached therewith
As with an onset of strength-shattering sound,
The rent vault of the roaring noon of night
From her throned seat of usurpation rang
Reverberate answer; such response there pealed
As though the tide's charge of a storming sea
Had burst the sky's wall, and made broad a breach
In the ambient girth and bastion flanked with stars
Guarding the fortress of the gods, and all
Crashed now together on ruin; and through that cry,
And higher above it, ceasing, one man's note
Tore its way like a trumpet: *Charge, make end,*
Charge, halt not, strike, rend up their strength by the roots,
Strike, break them, make your birthright's promise sure,
Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds,
And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,
Sons of the sea's waves! And all ears that heard
Rang with that fiery cry, that the fine air
Thereat was fired, and kindling filled the plain
Full of that fierce and trumpet-quenching breath
That spake the clarions silent; no glad song
For folk to hear that wist how dire a god
Begat this peril to them, what strong race
Fathered the sea-born tongue that sang them death,
Threatening: so raged through the red foam of fight
Poseidon's son Eumolpus; and the war
Quailed round him coming, and our side bore back,
As a stream thwarted by the wind and sea
That meet it midway mouth to mouth, and beat
The flood back of its issue; but the king
Shouted against them, crying, *O Father-god,*
Source of the god my father, from thine hand
Send me what end seems good now in thy sight,
But death from mine to this man; and the word
Quick on his lips yet like a blast of fire
Blew them together; and round its lords that met
Paused all the reeling battle: two main waves
Meeting, one hurled sheer from the sea-wall back

at shocks it sideways, one right in from sea
arging, that full in face takes at one blow
at whole recoil and ruin, with less fear
rtle men's eyes late shipwrecked; for a breath
est fronting crest hung, wave to wave rose poised,
en clashed, breaker to breaker; cloud with cloud
heaven, chariot with chariot closed on earth,
e fourfold flash and thunder; yet a breath,
d with the king's spear through his red heart's root
iven, like a rock split from its hill-side, fell
rled under his own horsehoofs dead on earth
e sea-beast that made war on earth from sea,
mb, with no shrill note left of storming song,
molpus; and his whole host with one stroke
ear-stricken through its dense deep iron heart
ll hurtling from us, and in fierce recoil
ew seaward as with one wide wail of waves,
sorbed with reluctation; such a groan
se from the fluctuant refluence of its ranks,
cked sullen back and strengthless; but scarce yet
e steeds had sprung, and wheels had bruised their lord
llen, when from highest height of the sundering heaven
e Father for his brother's son's sake slain
t a sheer shaft of lightning writhen, and smote
ght on his son's son's forehead, that unhelmed
one like the star that shines down storm, and gave
ght to men's eyes that saw thy lord their king
Stand, and take breath from battle; then too soon
Saw sink down as a sunset in sea-mist
The high bright head that here in van of the earth
Rose like a headland, and through storm and night
Took all the sea's wrath on it; and now dead
They bring thee back by war-forsaken ways
The strength called once thy husband, the great guard
That was of all men, stay of all men's lives.
They bear him slain of no man, but a god,
Godlike; and toward him dead the city's gates
Fling their arms open mother-like, through him
Saved; and the whole clear land is purged of war.
What wilt thou say now of this weal and woe?
Praxithea. I praise the gods for Athens. O sweet Earth,
Mother, what joy thy soul has of thy son,
Thy life of my dead lord, mine own soul knows
That knows thee godlike; and what grief should mine,
What sorrow should my heart have, who behold
Thee made so heaven-like happy? This alone
I only of all these blessed, all thy kind,
Crave this for blessing to me, that in theirs
Have but a part thus bitter; give me too
Death, and the sight of eyes that meet not mine.
And thee too from no godless heart or tongue
Reproachful, thee too by thy living name,
Father divine, merciful god, I call,
Spring of my life-springs, fountain of my stream,
Pure and poured forth to one great end with thine,

Sweet head sublime of triumph and these tears,
Cephisus, if thou seest as gladly shed
Thy blood in mine as thine own waves are given
To do this great land good, to give for love
The same lips drink, and comfort the same hearts,
Do thou then, O my father, white-souled god,
To thy most pure earth-hallowing heart eterne
Take what thou gavest to be given for these,
Take thy child to thee; for her time is full,
For all she hath borne she hath given, seen all she had
Flow from her, from her eyes and breasts and hands
Flow forth to feed this people; but be thou,
Dear god and gracious to all souls alive,
Good to thine own seed also; let me sleep,
Father; my sleepless darkling day is done,
My day of life like night, but slumberless:
For all my fresh fair springs, and his that ran
In one stream's bed with mine, are all run out
Into the deep of death. The gods have saved
Athens; my blood has bought her at their hand,
And ye sit safe; be glorious and be glad
As now for all time always, countrymen,
And love my dead forever; but me, me,
What shall man give for these so good as death?
Chorus. From the cup of my heart I pour through my lips along
The mingled wine of a joyful and sorrowful song;
Wine sweeter than honey and bitterer than blood that is poured
From the chalice of gold, from the point of the two-edged sword.
For the city redeemed should joy flow forth as a flood,
And a dirge make moan for the city polluted with blood.
Great praise should the gods have surely, my country, of thee,
Were thy brow but as white as of old for thy sons to see,
Were thy hands as bloodless, as blameless thy cheek divine;
But a stain on it stands of the life-blood offered for thine.
What thanks shall we give that are mixed not and marred with dread
For the price that has ransomed thine own with thine own child's head?
For a taint there cleaves to the people redeemed with blood,
And a plague to the blood-red hand.
The rain shall not cleanse it, the dew nor the sacred flood
That blesses the glad live land.
In the darkness of earth beneath, in the world without sun,
The shadows of past things reign;
And a cry goes up from the ghost of an ill deed done,
And a curse for a virgin slain.
Athena. Hear, men that mourn, and woman without mate,
Hearken; ye sick of soul with fear, and thou
Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear ye too,
Earth, and the glory of heaven, and winds of the air,
And the most holy heart of the deep sea,
Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear thou, sun,
Rolled round with the upper fire of rolling heaven,
And all the stars returning; hills and streams,
Springs and fresh fountains, day that seest these deeds,
Night that shalt hide not; and thou child of mine,
Child of a maiden, by a maid redeemed,

Blood-guiltless, though bought back
with innocent blood,
City mine own: I Pallas bring thee
word,
A virgin daughter of the most high god
Give all you charge, and lay command
on all,
The word I bring be wasted not; for
this
The gods have stablished, and his soul
hath sworn,
That time nor earth nor changing sons
of man,
Nor waves of generations, nor the
winds
Of ages risen and fallen that steer their
tides
Through light and dark of birth and
lovelier death
From storm toward haven inviolable,
shall see
So great a light alive beneath the sun
As the aweless eye of Athens; all fame
else
Shall be to her fame as a shadow in
sleep
To this wide noon at waking; men
most praised
In lands most happy for their children
found
Shall hold as highest honors given of
God
To be but likened to the least of thine,
Thy least of all, my city; thine shall
be
The crown of all songs sung, of all
deeds done
Thine the full flower for all time; in
thine hand
Shall time be like a sceptre, and thine
head
Wear worship for a garland; nor one
leaf
Shall change or winter cast out of thy
crown
Till all flowers wither in the world;
thine eyes
Shall first in man's flash lightning lib-
erty,
Thy tongue shall first say freedom;
thy first hand
Shall loose the thunder terror as a
hound
To hunt from sunset to the springs of
the sun
Kings that rose up out of the populous
east
To make their quarry of thee, and shall
strew
With multitudinous limbs of myriad
herds
The foodless pastures of the sea, and
make
With wrecks immeasurable and un-
summed defeat
One ruin of all their many-folded flocks
Ill shepherded from Asia; by thy side
Shall fight thy son the north wind, and
the sea
That was thine enemy shall be sworn
thy friend
And hand be struck in hand of his and
thine
To hold faith fast for aye; with thee,
though each
Make war on other, wind and sea shall
keep
Peace, and take truce as brethren for
thy sake
Leagued with one spirit and single-
hearted strength
To break thy foes in pieces, who shall
meet
The wind's whole soul and might of the
main sea
Full in their face of battle, and become
A laughter to thee; like a shower of
leaves
Shall their long galleys, rank by stagger-
ing rank,
Be dashed adrift on ruin, and in thy
sight
The sea deride them, and that lord of
the air
Who took by violent hand thy child to
wife
With his loud lips bemock them, by his
breath
Swept out of sight of being; so great
a grace
Shall this day give thee, that makes one
in heart
With mine the deep sea's godhead, and
his son
With him that was thine helmsman,
king with king,

Dead man with dead; such only names as these
Shalt thou call royal, take none else or less
To hold of men in honor; but with me
Shall these be worshipped as one god, and mix
With mine the might of their mysterious names
In one same shrine served singly, thence to keep
Perpetual guard on Athens; time and change,
Masters and lords of all men, shall be made
To thee that knowest no master and no lord
Servants; the days that lighten heaven, and nights
That darken, shall be ministers of thine
To attend upon thy glory, the great years
As light-engraven letters of thy name
Writ by the sun's hand on the front of the earth
For world-beholden witness; such a gift
For one fair chaplet of three lives enwreathed
To hang forever from thy storied shrine,
And this thy steersman fallen with tiller in hand
To stand forever at thy ship's helm seen,
Shall he that bade their threefold flower be shorn
And laid him low that planted, give thee back
In sign of sweet land reconciled with sea
And heavenlike earth with heaven: such promise-pledge
I daughter without mother born of God
To the most woful mother born of man
Plight for continual comfort. Hail, and live
Beyond all human hap of mortal doom
Happy; for so my sire hath sworn and I.

Praxithea. O queen Athena! from a heart made whole
Take as thou givest us blessing; never tear
Shall stain for shame, nor groan untune the song
That as a bird shall spread and fold its wings
Here in thy praise forever, and fulfil
The whole world's crowning city crowned with thee
As the sun's eye fulfils and crowns with sight
The circling crown of heaven. There is no grief
Great as the joy to be made one in will
With him that is the heart and rûle of life,
And thee, god born of god; thy name is ours,
And thy large grace more great than our desire.

Chorus. From the depth of the springs of my spirit a fountain is poured of thanksgiving,
My country, my mother, for thee,
That thy dead for their death shall have life in thy sight and a name everliving
At heart of thy people to be.
In the darkness of change ont he waters of time they shall turn from afar
To the beam of this dawn for a beacon, the light of these pyres for a star.
They shall see thee who love and take comfort, who hate thee shall see and take warning,
Our mother that makest us free;
And the sons of thine earth shall have help of the waves that made war on their morning,
And friendship and fame of the sea.

CHASTELARD: A TRAGEDY.

DEDICATE THIS PLAY, AS A PARTIAL EXPRESSION OF REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE, TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO THE GREATEST EXILE, AND THEREFORE TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO VICTOR HUGO.

PERSONS.

Mary Stuart.	Mary Hamilton.	Randolph.
Mary Beaton.	Pierre de Boscosel de Chastelard.	Morton.
Mary Seyton.	Darnley.	Lindsay.
Mary Carmichael.	Murray.	Father Black.

Guards, Burgesses, a Preacher, Citizens, etc.

Another Yle is there toward the Northe, in the See Occean, where that ben fulle cruele and ful vele Wommen of Nature: and thei han precious Stones in hire Eyen; and thei ben of that kynde, hat zif they beholden ony man, thei slen him anon with the beholdynge, as dothe the Basilisk.

MAUNDEVILE'S *Voiage and Travaile*, Ch. xxviii.

ACT I. MARY BEATON.

SCENE I.— *The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

The four MARIES.

Mary Beaton (sings):—

1.

Le navire
Est à l'eau;
Entends rire
Ce gros flot
Que fait luire
Et bruire
Le vieux sire
Aquilo.

2.

Dans l'espace
Du grand air
Le vent passe
Comme un fer
Siffle et sonne,
Tombe et tonne,
Prend et donne
À la mer.

3.

Vois, la brise
Tourne au nord,
Et la bise
Souffle et mord
Sur ta pure
Chevelure
Qui murmure
Et se tord.

Mary Hamilton. You never sing now but it makes you sad;
Why do you sing?

Mary Beaton. I hardly know well why;
It makes me sad to sing, and very sad
To hold my peace.

Mary Carmichael. I know what saddens you.
Mary Beaton. Prithee, what? what?
Mary Carmichael. Why, since we came from France.
You have no lover to make stuff for songs.
Mary Beaton. You are wise; for there my pain begins indeed,
Because I have no lovers out of France.
Mary Seyton. I mind me of one Olivier de Pesme,
(You knew him, sweet) a pale man with short hair,
Wore tied at sleeve the Beaton color.
Mary Carmichael. Blue —
I know, blue scarfs. I never liked that knight.
Mary Hamilton. Me? I know him? I hardly knew his name.
Black, was his hair? no, brown.
Mary Seyton. Light pleases you:
I have seen the time brown served you well enough.
Mary Carmichael. Lord Darnley's is a mere maid's yellow.
Mary Hamilton. No;
A man's, good color.
Mary Seyton. Ah, does that burn your blood?
Why, what a bitter color is this red
That fills your face! if you be not in love,
I am no maiden.
Mary Hamilton. Nay, God help true hearts!
I must be stabbed with love then, to the bone,
Yea, to the spirit, past cure.
Mary Seyton. What were you saying?
I see some jest run up and down your lips.
Mary Carmichael. Finish your song; I know you have more of it;
Good sweet, I pray you do.
Mary Beaton. I am too sad.
Mary Carmichael. This will not sadden you to sing; your song
Tastes sharp of sea and the sea's bitterness,
But small pain sticks on it.
Mary Beaton. Nay, it is sad;
For either sorrow with the beaten lips
Sings not at all, or if it does get breath
Sings quick and sharp like a hard sort of mirth:
And so this song does; or I would it did,
That it might please me better than it does.
Mary Seyton. Well, as you choose then. What a sort of men
Crowd all about the squares!
Mary Carmichael. Ay, hateful men;
For look how many talking mouths be there,
So many angers show their teeth at us.
Which one is that, stooped somewhat in the neck,
That walks so with his chin against the wind,
Lips sideways shut? a keen-faced man — lo there,
He that walks midmost.
Mary Seyton. That is Master Knox.
He carries all these folk within his skin,
Bound up as 'twere between the brows of him
Like a bad thought; their hearts beat inside his;
They gather at his lips like flies in the sun,
Thrust sides to catch his face.
Mary Carmichael. Look forth; so — push
The window — further — see you any thing?
Mary Hamilton. They are well gone; but pull the lattice in,
The wind is like a blade aslant. Would God
I could get back one day I think upon;
The day we four and some six after us
Sat in that Louvre garden and plucked fruits
To cast love-lots with in the gathered grapes;
This way: you shut your eyes, and reach and pluck,
And catch a lover for each grape you get.
I got but one, a green one, and it broke
Between my fingers, and it ran down through them.
Mary Seyton. Ay, and the queen fell in a little wrath
Because she got so many, and tore off

ne of them she had plucked unwittingly —
said, against her will. What fell to you?
Mary Beaton. Me? nothing but the stalk of a stripped bunch
h clammy grape-juice leavings at the tip.
Mary Carmichael. Ay, true, the queen came first, and she won all;
as her bunch we took to cheat you with.
at, will you weep for that now? for you seem
one that means to weep. God pardon me!
ink your throat is choking up with tears.
are not well, sweet, for a lying jest
shake you thus much.
Mary Beaton. I am well enough:
e not your pity trouble for my sake.
Mary Seyton. If you be well, sing out your song and laugh,
ugh it were but to fret the fellows there. —
shall we catch her secret washed and wet
ne middle of her song; for she must weep
ne sing through.
Mary Hamilton. I told you it was love;
atched her eyes all through the masquing time
l on his face by morsels; she must weep.
Mary Beaton (*sings*): —

4.

Le navire
Passe et luit,
Puis chavire
À grand bruit;
Et sur l'onde
La plus blonde
Tête au monde
Flotte et fuit.

5.

Moi, je rame,
Et l'amour
C'est ma flamme,
Mon grand jour,
Ma chandelle
Blanche et belle,
Ma chapelle
De séjour.

6.

Toi, mon âme
Et ma foi,
Sois ma dame
Et ma loi;
Sois ma mie,
Sois Marie,
Sois ma vie,
Toute à moi!

Mary Seyton. I know the song; a song of Chastelard's
He made in coming over with the queen.
How hard it rained! he played that over twice,
Sitting before her, singing each word soft,
As if he loved the least she listened to.
Mary Hamilton. No marvel if he loved it for her sake;
She is the choice of women in the world,
Is she not, sweet?
Mary Beaton. I have seen no fairer one.
Mary Seyton. And the most loving: did you note last night
How long she held him with her hands and eyes,
Looking a little sadly, and at last
Kissed him below the chin, and parted so
As the dance ended?
Mary Hamilton. This was courtesy;
So might I kiss my singing-bird's red bill
After some song, till he bit short my lip.
Mary Seyton. But if a lady hold her bird anights
To sing to her between her fingers — ha?
I have seen such birds.
Mary Carmichael. Oh, you talk emptily;
She is full of grace; and marriage in good time
Will wash the fool called scandal off men's lips.
Mary Hamilton. I know not that; I know how folk would gibe

If one of us pushed courtesy so far.
She has always loved love's fashions well; you wot,
The marshal, head friend of this Chastelard's,
She used to talk with ere he brought her here,
And sow their talk with little kisses thick
As roses in rose-harvest. For myself,
I cannot see which side of her that lurks
Which snares in such wise all the sense of men;
What special beauty, subtle as man's eye
And tender as the inside of the eyelid is,
There grows about her.
Mary Carmichael. I think her cunning speech —
The soft and rapid shudder of her breath
In talking — the rare, tender little laugh —
The pitiful sweet sound like a bird's sigh
When her voice breaks; her talking does it all.
Mary Seyton. I say, her eyes with those clear perfect brows:
It is the playing of those eyelashes,
The lure of amorous looks as sad as love,
Plucks all souls toward her like a net.
Mary Hamilton. What, what!
You praise her in too lover-like a wise
For women that praise women; such report
Is like robes worn the rough side next the skin,
Frets where it warms.
Mary Seyton. You think too much in French.

Enter DARNLEY.

Here comes your thorn; what glove against it now?
Mary Hamilton. Oh, God's good pity! this a thorn of mine?
It has not run deep in yet.
Mary Carmichael. I am not sure:
The red runs over to your face's edge.
Darnley. Give me one word; nay, lady, for love's sake;
Here, come this way; I will not kee you; no.
— O my sweet soul, why do you wron me thus?
Mary Hamilton. Why will you giv me for men's eyes to burn?
Darnley. What, sweet, I love you a mine own soul loves me;
They shall divide when we do.
Mary Hamilton. I cannot say.
Darnley. Why, look you, I am broke with the queen;
This is the rancor and the bitter heart
That grows in you, by God it is naugh else.
Why, this last night she held me for fool —
Ay, God wot, for a thing of stripe an bell.
I bade her make me marshal in he masque —
I had the dress here painted, gold an gray
(That is, not gray, but a blue green lik this) —
She tells me she had chosen her ma shal, she,
The best o' the world for cunning an sweet wit;
And what sweet fool but her swee knight, God help!
To serve her with that three-inch wit o his?
She is all fool and fiddling now: fo me,
I am well pleased; God knows, if might choose
I would not be more troubled with he love.
Her love is like a brier that rasps th flesh,
And yours is soft like flowers. Com this way, love;
So, further in this window: hark yo here.

Enter CHASTELARD.

Mary Beaton. Good morrow, sir.
Chastelard. Good morrow, noble lad
Mary Carmichael. You have hear no news? what news?
Chastelard. Nay, I have none.
That maiden-tongued male-faced Eliz beth

ath eyes unlike our queen's, hair not so soft,
nd hands more sudden save for courtesy;
nd lips no kiss of love's could bring to flower
such red wise as our queen's; save this news,
know none English.
Mary Seyton. Come, no news of her; or God's love talk still rather of our queen.
Mary Beaton. God give us grace then to speak well of her.
ou did right joyfully in our masque last night;
saw you when the queen lost breath (her head
ent back, her chin and lips catching the air—
goodly thing to see her) how you smiled
cross her head, between your lips—no doubt
ou had great joy, sir. Did not you take note
ice how one lock fell? that was good to see.
Chastelard. Yea, good enough to live for.
Mary Beaton. Nay, but sweet
ough to die. When she broke off the dance,
rning round short and soft—I never saw
ch supple ways of walking as she has.
Chastelard. Why do you praise her gracious looks to me?
Mary Beaton. Sir, for mere sport; but tell me even for love
ow much you love her.
Chastelard. I know not: it may be
I had set mine eyes to find that out,
should not know it. She hath fair eyes: may be
ove her for sweet eyes or brows or hair,
r the smooth temples, where God touching her
ade blue with sweeter veins the flower-sweet white;
for the tender turning of her wrist,
marriage of the eyelid with the cheek;
I cannot tell; or flush of lifting throat,
I know not if the color get a name
This side of heaven—no man knows; or her mouth,
A flower's lip with a snake's lip, stinging sweet,
And sweet to sting with: face that one would see
And then fall blind and die with sight of it
Held fast between the eyelids—oh, all these
And all her body and the soul to that,
The speech and shape and hand and foot and heart
That I would die of—yea, her name that turns
My face to fire being written—I know no whit
How much I love them.
Mary Beaton. Nor how she loves you back?
Chastelard. I know her ways of loving, all of them:
A sweet soft way the first is; afterward
It burns and bites like fire; the end of that,
Charred dust, and eyelids bitten through with smoke.
Mary Beaton. What has she done for you to gird at her?
Chastelard. Nothing. You do not greatly love her, you,
Who do not—gird, you call it. I am bound to France;
Shall I take word from you to any one?
So it be harmless, not a gird, I will.
Mary Beaton. I doubt you will not go hence with your life.
Chastelard. Why, who should slay me? no man northwards born,
In my poor mind; my sword's lip is no maid's
To fear the iron biting of their own,
Though they kiss hard for hate's sake.
Mary Beaton. Lo you, sir,
How sharp he whispers, what close breath and eyes—
And hers are fast upon him, do you see?
Chastelard. Well, which of these must take my life in hand?
Pray God it be the better: nay, which hand?

Mary Beaton. I think, none such.
The man is goodly made;
She is tender-hearted toward his courtesies,
And would not have them fall too low to find.
Look, they slip forth.
[*Exeunt* DARNLEY *and* MARY HAMILTON.
Mary Seyton. For love's sake, after them,
And soft as love can.
[*Exeunt* MARY CARMICHAEL *and* MARY SEYTON.
Chastelard. True, a goodly man.
What shapeliness and state he hath, what eyes,
Brave brow and lordly lip! were it not fit
Great queens should love him?
Mary Beaton. See you now, fair lord,
I have but scant breath's time to help myself,
And I must cast my heart out on a chance;
So bear with me. That we twain have loved well,
I have no heart nor wit to say; God wot
We had never made good lovers, you and I.
Look you, I would not have you love me, sir,
For all the love's sake in the world. I say,
You love the queen, and loving burns you up,
And mars the grace and joyous wit you had,
Turning your speech to sad, your face to strange,
Your mirth to nothing: and I am piteous, I,
Even as the queen is, and such women are;
And if I helped you to your love-longing,
Meseems some grain of love might fall my way,
And love's god help me when I came to love:
I have read tales of men that won their loves
On some such wise.
Chastelard. If you mean mercifully,
I am bound to you past thought and thank; if worse,
I will but thank your lips and not your heart.
Mary Beaton. Nay, let love wait, and praise me, in God's name,
Some day when he shall find me; yet, God wot,
My lips are of one color with my heart.
Withdraw now from me, and about midnight
In some close chamber without light or noise
It may be I shall get you speech of her;
She loves you well; it may be she will speak,
I wot not what; she loves you at her heart.
Let her not see that I have given you word,
Lest she take shame and hate her love. Till night.
Let her not see it.
Chastelard. I will not thank you now,
And then I'll die what sort of death you will.
Farewell. [*Exit.*
Mary Beaton. And by God's mercy and my love's
I will find ways to earn such thank of you. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *A Hall in the same.*

The QUEEN, DARNLEY, MURRAY, RANDOLPH, *the* MARIES, CHASTELARD, *etc.*

Queen. Hath no man seen my lord of Chastelard?
Nay, no great matter. Keep you on that side:
Begin the purpose.
Mary Carmichael. Madam, he is here.
Queen. Begin a measure now that other side.
I will not dance; let them play soft a little.
Fair sir, we had a dance to tread to-night,
To teach our north folk all sweet ways of France;
But at this time we have no heart to it.

, sir, and talk. Look, this breast-
clasp is new,
e French king sent it me.
Chastelard. A goodly thing:
t what device? the word is ill to catch.
Queen. A Venus crowned, that eats
the hearts of men:
low her flies a love with a bat's wings,
d strings the hair of paramours to
bind
ve birds' feet with. Lo what small
subtle work:
e smith's name, Gian Crisostomo
da — what?
n you read that? The sea froths
underfoot;
e stands upon the sea, and it curls up
soft loose curls that run to one in
the wind.
t her hair is not shaken, there's a
fault;
lies straight down in close-cut points
and tongues,
t like blown hair. The legend is
writ small:
ll one makes out this — *Cave* — if
you look.
Chastelard. I see the Venus well
enough, God wot,
t nothing of the legend.
Queen. Come, fair lord,
all we dance now? my heart is good
again. [*They dance a measure.*
Darnley. I do not like this manner of
a dance,
is game of two by two; it were much
better
meet between the changes and to
mix
an still to keep apart and whispering
ch lady out of earshot with her friend.
Mary Beaton. That's as the lady
serves her knight, I think:
e are broken up too much.
Darnley. Nay, no such thing;
not wroth, lady, I wot it was the
queen
cked each his friend out. Look you
now — your ear —
love had gone by choosing — how
they laugh,
an lips together, and wring hands
underhand!
What, you look white too, sick of heart,
ashamed,
No marvel — for men call it — hark you
though — [*They pass.*
Murray. Was the Queen found no
merrier in France?
Mary Hamilton. Why, have you seen
her sorrowful to-night?
Murray. I say not so much; blithe
she seems at whiles,
Gentle and goodly doubtless in all ways,
But hardly with such lightness and quick
heart
As it was said.
Mary Hamilton. 'Tis your great care
of her
Makes you misdoubt; naught else.
Murray. Yea, may be so;
She has no cause I know to sadden her.
[*They pass.*
Queen. I am tired too soon; I could
have danced down hours
Two years gone hence, and felt no
wearier.
One grows much older northwards, my
fair lord;
I wonder men die south; meseems all
France
Smells sweet with living, and bright
breath of days
That keep men far from dying. Peace;
pray you now,
No dancing more. Sing, sweet, and
make us mirth;
We have done with dancing measures:
sing that song
You call the song of love at ebb.
Mary Beaton (*sings*).

1.

Between the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me;
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight:
Ah, love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea?

2.

Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire;

Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.

3.

Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me;
Then down the all-golden water-ways
His feet flew after yesterdays;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.

4.

Between the sea-strand and the sea
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me;
The first star saw twain turn to one
Between the moonrise and the sun;
The next, that saw not love, saw me
Between the sea-banks and the sea.

Queen. Lo, sirs,
What mirth is here! Some song of yours, fair lord;
You know glad ways of rhyming — no such tunes
As go to tears.
Chastelard. I made this yesterday;
For its love's sake I pray you let it live. [*He sings.*

1.

Après tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
Soyez secourable à mon âme en peine.
Voyez comme Avril fait l'amour aux fleurs;
Dame d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,
Dieu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait reine.

2.

Rions, je t'en prie; aimons, je le veux.
Le temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère.
Pour baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
Pour baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux;
L'amour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.

Queen. 'Tis a true song; love shall not pluck time back,
Nor time lie down with love. For me, I am old;
Have you no hair changed since you changed to Scot?
I look each day to see my face drawn up
About the eyes, as if they sucked the cheeks.
I think this air and face of things here north
Puts snow at flower-time in the blood, and tears
Between the sad eyes and the merry mouth
In their youth-days.
Chastelard. It is a bitter air.
Queen. Faith, if I might be gone, sir, would I stay?
I think, for no man's love's sake.
Chastelard. I think not.
Queen. Do you not mind at landing how the quay
Looked like a blind wet face in waste of wind
And washing of wan waves? how the hard mist
Made the hills ache? Your songs lied loud, my knight:
They said my face would burn off cloud and rain
Seen once, and fill the crannied land with fire,
Kindle the capes in their blind black-gray hoods —
I know not what. You praise me past all loves;
And these men love me little; 'tis some fault,
I think, to love me: even a fool's sweet fault.
I have your verse still beating in my head,
Of how the swallow got a wing broken
In the springtime, and lay upon his side
Watching the rest fly off i' the red leaf-time,
And broke his heart with grieving at himself
Before the snow came. Do you know that lord
With sharp-set eyes? and him with huge thewed throat?
Good friends to me; I had need love them well.

Why do you look one way? I will not have you
Keep your eyes here: 'tis no great wit in me
To care much now for old French friends of mine. —
Come, a fresh measure; come, play well for me,
Fair sirs, your playing puts life in foot and heart. —
Darnley. Lo you again, sirs, how she laughs and leans,
Holding him fast — the supple way she hath!
Your queen hath none such; better as she is
For all her measures, a grave English maid,
Than queen of snakes and Scots.
Randolph. She is over-fair
To be so sweet, and hurt not. A good knight;
Goodly to look on.
Murray. Yea, a good sword too,
And of good kin; too light of loving though;
These jangling song-smiths are keen love-mongers,
They snap at all meats.
Darnley. What! by God I think,
For all his soft French face and bright boy's sword,
There be folks fairer: and for knightliness,
These hot-lipped brawls of Paris breed sweet knights, —
Fere stabbers for a laugh across the wine. —
Queen. There, I have danced you down for once, fair lord;
You look pale now. Nay then for courtesy
I must needs help you; do not bow your head,
I am tall enough to reach close under it.
[*Kisses him.*
Now come, we'll sit and see this passage through. —
Darnley. A courtesy, God help us! courtesy —
Pray God it wound not where it should heal wounds.

Why, there was here last year some lord of France
(Priest on the wrong side as some folk are prince)
Told tales of Paris ladies — nay, by God,
No jest for queen's lips to catch laughter of
That would keep clean; I wot he made good mirth,
But she laughed over sweetly, and in such wise —
Nay, I laughed too, but lothly. —
Queen. How they look!
The least thing courteous galls them to the bone.
What would one say now I were thinking of?
Chastelard. It seems, some sweet thing.
Queen. True, a sweet one, sir, —
That madrigal you made Alys de Saulx
Of the three ways of love; the first kiss honor,
The second pity, and the last kiss love.
Which think you now was that I kissed you with?
Chastelard. It should be pity, if you be pitiful:
For I am past all honoring that keep
Outside the eye of battle, where my kin
Fallen overseas have found this many a day
No helm of mine between them; and for love,
I think of that as dead men of good days
Ere the wrong side of death was theirs, when God
Was friends with them.
Queen. Good; call it pity, then.
You have a subtle riddling skill at love
Which is not like a lover. For my part,
I am resolved to be well done with love,
Though I were fairer-faced than all the world;
As there be fairer. Think you, fair my knight,
Love shall live after life in any man?
I have given you stuff for riddles.

Chastelard. Most sweet queen,
They say men dying remember, with sharp joy
And rapid reluctation of desire,
Some old thing, some swift breath of wind, some word,
Some sword-stroke or dead lute-strain, some lost sight,
Some sea-blossom stripped to the sun and burned
At naked ebb — some river-flower that breathes
Against the stream like a swooned swimmer's mouth —
Some tear or laugh ere lip and eye were man's —
Sweet stings that struck the blood in riding — nay,
Some garment or sky-color or spice-smell,
And die with heart and face shut fast on it,
And know not why, and weep not: it may be
Men shall hold love fast always in such wise
In new fair lives where all are new things else,
And know not why, and weep not.
Queen. A right rhyme,
And right a rhyme's worth: nay, a sweet song, though.
What! shall my cousin hold fast that love of his,
Her face and talk, when life ends? as God grant
His life end late and sweet! I love him well.
She is fair enough, his lover; a fair-faced maid,
With gray sweet eyes and tender touch of talk;
And that, God wot, I wist not. See you, sir,
Men say I needs must get wed hastily;
Do none point lips at him?
Chastelard. Yea, guessingly.
Queen. God help such lips! and get me leave to laugh!
What should I do but paint and put him up.
Like a gilt god, a saintship in a shrine,
For all fools' feast? God's mercy on men's wits!
Tall as a housetop and as bare of brain —
I'll have no staffs with fool-faced carven heads
To hang my life on. Nay, for love, no more,
For fear I laugh and set their eyes on edge
To find out why I laugh. Good night, fair lords;
Bid them cease playing. Give me your hand; good night.

SCENE III. — MARY BEATON'S *Chamber: night.*

Enter CHASTELARD.

Chastelard. I am not certain yet she will not come;
For I can feel her hand's heat still in mine,
Past doubting of, and see her brows half drawn,
And half a light in the eyes. If she come not,
I am no worse than he that dies to-night.
This two years' patience gets an end at least,
Whichever way I am well done with it.
How hard the thin sweet moon is, split and laced
And latticed over, just a stray of it
Catching and clinging at a strip of wall,
Hardly a hand's-breadth. Did she turn indeed
In going out? not to catch up her gown
The page let slip, but to keep sight of me?
There was a soft small stir beneath her eyes
Hard to put on, a quivering of her blood
That knew of the old nights watched out wakefully.
Those measures of her dancing too were changed —
More swift and with more eager stops at whiles
And rapid pauses where breath failed her lips.

Enter MARY BEATON.

n, she is come: if you be she indeed,
et me but hold your hand; what! no
word yet?
ou turn and kiss me without word; O
sweet!
you will slay me, be not over-quick,
ll me with some slow heavy kiss that
plucks
ne heart out at the lips. Alas! sweet
love,
ve me some old sweet word to kiss
away.
it a jest? for I can feel your hair
uch me — I may embrace your body
too?
know you well enough without sweet
words.
ow should one make you speak? This
is not she.
me in the light; nay, let me see your
eyes.
, you it is? what have I done to you?
d do you look now to be slain for this
at you twist back and shudder like
one stabbed?

Mary Beaton. Yea, kill me now, and
do not look at me:
d knows I meant to die. Sir, for
God's love,
ll me now quick ere I go mad with
shame!

Chastelard. Cling not upon my wrists:
let go the hilt:
y, you will bruise your hand with it.
Stand up;
u shall not have my sword forth.

Mary Beaton. Kill me now,
ill not rise: there, I am patient, see.
ill not strive, but kill me for God's
sake.

Chastelard. Pray you, rise up, and be
not shaken so:
rgive me my rash words, my heart
was gone
er the thing you were: be not
ashamed;
e me the shame, you have no part
in it;
I not say a word shall do you good?
rgive that too.

Mary Beaton. I shall run crazed with
shame;
But when I felt your lips catch hold on
mine,
It stopped my breath: I would have
told you all.
Let me go out; you see I lied to you,
And I am shamed; I pray you, loose
me, sir,
Let me go out.

Chastelard. Think no base things of
me:
I were most base to let you go ashamed.
Think my heart's love and honor go
with you:
Yea, while I live, for your love's noble
sake,
I am your servant in what wise may be,
To love and serve you with right thank-
ful heart.

Mary Beaton. I have given men leave
to mock me, and must bear
What shame they please: you have
good cause to mock.
Let me pass now.

Chastelard. You know I mock you
not.
If ever I leave off to honor you,
God give me shame! I were the worst
churl born.

Mary Beaton. No marvel though the
queen should love you too,
Being such a knight. I pray you for
her love,
Lord Chastelard, of your great courtesy,
Think now no scorn to give me my last
kiss
That I shall have of man before I die.
Even the same lips you kissed and knew
not of
Will you kiss now, knowing the shame
of them,
And say no one word to me afterwards,
That I may see I have loved the best
lover
And man most courteous of all men
alive?

Mary Seyton (*within*). Here, fetch
the light: nay, this way; enter
all.

Mary Beaton. I am twice undone.
Fly, get some hiding, sir;
They have spied upon me somehow.

Chastelard. Nay, fear not;
Stand by my side.

Enter MARY SEYTON *and* MARY HAMILTON.

Mary Hamilton. Give me that light: this way.

Chastelard. What jest is here, fair ladies? it walks late,
Something too late for laughing.

Mary Seyton. Nay, fair sir,
What jest is this of yours? Look to your lady:
She is nigh swooned. The queen shall know all this.

Mary Hamilton. A grievous shame it is we are fallen upon;
Hold forth the light. Is this your care of us?
Nay, come, look up: this is no game, God wot.

Chastelard. Shame shall befall them that speak shamefully:
I swear this lady is as pure and good
As any maiden, and who believes me not
Shall keep the shame for his part and the lie.
To them that come in honor and not in hate,
I will make answer. — Lady, have good heart.
Give me the light there: I will see you forth.

ACT II. — DARNLEY.

SCENE I. — *The great Chamber in Holyrood.*

The QUEEN *and* MARY SEYTON.

Queen. But will you swear it?

Mary Seyton. Swear it, madam?

Queen. Ay —
Swear it.

Mary Seyton. Madam, I am not friends with them.

Queen. Swear then against them if you are not friends.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I saw them kiss.

Queen. So lovers use —
What, their mouths close? a goodly way of love!
Or but the hands? or on her throat? Prithee —
You have sworn that.

Mary Seyton. I say what I saw done.

Queen. Ay, you did see her cheeks (God smite them red!)
Kissed either side? what, they must eat strange food,
Those singing lips of his?

Mary Seyton. Sweet meat enough —
They started at my coming five yards off,
But there they were.

Queen. A maid may have kissed cheeks
And no shame in them — yet one would not swear.
You have sworn that. Pray God he be not mad:
A sickness in his eyes. The left side love
(I was told that) and the right courtesy.
'Tis good fools' fashion. What! no more but this?
For me, God knows I am no whit wroth, — not I;
But, for your fame's sake that her shame will sting,
I cannot see a way to pardon her, —
For your fame's sake, lest that be prated of.

Mary Seyton. Nay, if she were not chaste — I have not said
She was not chaste.

Queen. I know you are tender of her;
And your sweet word will hardly turn her sweet.

Mary Seyton. Indeed I would fain do her any good.
Shall I not take some gracious word to her?

Queen. Bid her not come or wait on me to-day.

Mary Seyton. Will you see him?

Queen. See — oh, this Chastelard?
He doth not well to sing maids into shame;
And folk are sharp here; yet for sweet friends' sake
Assuredly I'll see him. I am not wroth.

. goodly man, and a good sword thereto —
t may be he shall wed her. I am not wroth.
Mary Seyton. Nay, though she bore with him, she hath no great love, doubt me, that way.
Queen. God mend all, I pray — nd keep us from all wrong-doing and wild words.
think there is no fault men fall upon ut I could pardon. Look you, I would swear
he were no paramour for any man, o well I love her.
Mary Seyton. Am I to bid him in?
Queen. As you will, sweet. But if you held me hard
ou did me grievous wrong. Doth he wait there?
len call me over-tender; I had rather so,
han too ungracious. — Father, what with you?
Enter FATHER BLACK.
Father Black. God's peace and health of soul be with the queen!
nd pardon be with me though I speak truth.
s I was going on peaceable men's wise
hrough your good town, desiring no man harm,
kind of shameful woman with thief's lips
pake somewhat to me over a thrust-out chin,
bliciting as I deemed an alms; which alms
Remembering what was writ of Magdalen)
gave not grudging but with pure good heart,
Vhen lo! some scurril children that lurked near,
et there by Satan for my stumbling-stone,
ell hooting with necks thwart and eyes a-squint,
creeched and made horns and shot out tongues at me, —
s at my Lord the Jews shot out their tongues,
And made their heads wag; I considering this
Took up my cross in patience, and passed forth:
Nevertheless one ran between my feet,
And made me totter, using speech and signs
I smart with shame to think of: then my blood
Kindled, and I was moved to smite the knave,
And the knave howled; whereat the lewd whole herd
Brake forth upon me, and cast mire and stones,
So that I ran sore risk of bruise or gash
If they had touched; likewise I heard men say,
(Their foul speech missed not of mine ear) they cried,
"This devil's mass-priest hankers for new flesh
Like a dry hound; let him seek such at home,
Snuff and smoke out the queen's French" —
Queen. They said that?
Father Black. "— French paramours that breed more shames than sons
All her court through;" forgive me.
Queen. With my heart.
Father, you see the hatefulness of these —
They loathe us for our love. I am not moved:
What should I do being angry? By this hand
(Which is not big enough to bruise their lips),
I marvel what thing should be done with me
To make me wroth. We must have patience with us
When we seek thank of men.
Father Black. Madam, farewell;
I pray God keep you in such patient heart. [*Exit.*
Queen. Let him come now.
Mary Seyton. Madam, he is at hand. [*Exit.*
Enter CHASTELARD.

Queen. Give me that broidery-frame; how, gone so soon?
No maid about? Reach me some skein of silk.
What! are you come, fair lord? Now by my life
That lives here idle, I am right glad of you;
I have slept so well and sweet since yesternight
It seems our dancing put me in glad heart.
Did you sleep well?
Chastelard. Yea, as a man may sleep.
Queen. You smile as if I jested; do not men
Sleep as we do? Had you fair dreams in the night?
For me — but I should fret you with my dreams —
I dreamed sweet things. You are good at soothsaying:
Make me a sonnet of my dream.
Chastelard. I will,
When I shall know it.
Queen. I thought I was asleep
In Paris, lying by my lord, and knew
In some wise he was well awake, and yet
I could not wake too; and I seemed to know
He hated me, and the least breath I made
Would turn somehow to slay or stifle me.
Then in brief time he rose and went away,
Saying, *Let her dream, but when her dream is out*
I will come back and kill her as she wakes.
And I lay sick and trembling with sore fear,
And still I knew that I was deep asleep;
And thinking, *I must dream now, or I die,*
God send me some good dream lest I be slain!
Fell fancying one had bound my feet with cords,
And bade me dance, and the first measure made
I fell upon my face, and wept for pain;
And my cords broke, and I began the dance
To a bitter tune; and he that danced with me
Was clothed in black with long red lines and bars,
And masked down to the lips, but by the chin
I knew you though your lips were sewn up close
With scarlet thread all dabbled wet in blood.
And then I knew the dream was not for good.
And striving with sore travail to reach up
And kiss you (you were taller in my dream)
I missed your lips, and woke.
Chastelard. Sweet dreams, you said?
An evil dream I hold it for, sweet love.
Queen. You call love sweet; yea, what is bitter, then?
There's nothing broken sleep could hit upon
So bitter as the breaking down of love.
You call me sweet; I am not sweet to you,
Nor you — O, I would say not sweet to me,
And if I said so I should hardly lie.
But there have been those things between us, sir,
That men call sweet.
Chastelard. I know not how *There is*
Turns to *There hath been;* 'tis a heavier change
Than change of flesh to dust. Yet, though years change,
And good things end, and evil things grow great,
The old love that was, or that was dreamed about,
That sang and kissed and wept upon itself,
Laughed and ran mad with love of its own face,
That was a sweet thing.
Queen. Nay, I know not well.
'Tis when the man is held fast underground
They say for sooth what manner of heart he had.
We are alive, and cannot be well sure
If we loved much or little: think you not
It were convenient one of us should die?

Chastelard. Madam, your speech is harsh to understand.
Queen. Why, there could come no change then; one of us
Vould never need to fear our love might turn
o the sad thing that it may grow to be.
would sometimes all things were dead asleep
hat I have loved, all buried in soft beds
nd sealed with dreams and visions, and each dawn
ıng to by sorrows, and all night assuaged
short sweet kisses and by sweet long loves
or old life's sake, lest weeping overmuch
ıould wake them in a strange new time, and arm
emory's blind hand to kill forgetful ness.
Chastelard. Look, you dream still, and sadly.
Queen. Sooth, a dream;
or such things died or lied in sweet love's face,
ıd I forget them not, God help my wit!
would the whole world were made up of sleep
ıd life not fashioned out of lies and loves.
é foolish women have such times, you know,
hen we are weary or afraid or sick
r perfect nothing.
Chastelard (*aside*). Now would one be fain
o know what bitter or what dangerous thing
e thinks of, softly chafing her soft lip.
e must mean evil.
Queen. Are you sad, too, sir,
ıat you say nothing?
Chastelard. I? not sad a jot—
ıough this your talk might make a blithe man sad.
Queen. O me! I must not let stray sorrows out;
ey are ill to fledge, and if they feel blithe air
They wail and chirp untunefully. Would God
I had been a man! when I was born, men say,
My father turned his face and wept to think
I was no man.
Chastelard. Will you weep, too?
Queen. In sooth,
If I were man I should be no base man;
I could have fought; yea, I could fight now, too,
If men would show me; I would I were the king!
I should be all ways better than I am.
Chastelard. Nay, would you have more honor, having this—
Men's hearts and loves and the sweet spoil of souls
Given you like simple gold to bind your hair?
Say you were king of thews, not queen of souls,
An iron headpiece hammered to a head,
You might fail, too.
Queen. No, then I would not fail,
Or God should make me woman back again.
To be King James—you hear men say *King James*,
The word sounds like a piece of gold thrown down,
Rings with a round and royal note in it—
A name to write good record of; this king
Fought here and there, was beaten such a day,
And came at last to a good end, his life
Being all lived out, and for the main part well
And like a king's life; then to have men say
(As now they say of Flodden, here they broke
And there they held up to the end) years back
They saw you—*yea, I saw the king's face helmed*
Red in the hot lit foreground of some fight
Hold the whole war as it were by the bit, a horse

Fit for his knees' grip — the great rearing war
That frothed with lips flung up, and shook men's lives
Off either flank of it like snow; I saw
(*You could not hear as his sword rang*),
saw him
Shout, laugh, smite straight, and flaw the riven ranks,
Move as the wind moves, and his horse's feet
Stripe their long flags with dust. Why, if one died,
To die so in the heart and heat of war
Were a much goodlier thing than living soft
And speaking sweet for fear of men. Woe's me!
Is there no way to pluck this body off?
Then I should never fear a man again,
Even in my dreams I should not; no, by heaven.
Chastelard. I never thought you did fear any thing.
Queen. God knows I do; I could be sick with wrath
To think what grievous fear I have 'twixt whiles
Of mine own self and of base men. Last night
If certain lords were glancing where I was
Under the eyelid, with sharp lip and brow,
I tell you, for pure shame and fear of them,
I could have gone and slain them.
Chastelard. Verily,
You are changed since those good days that fell in France;
But yet I think you are not so changed at heart
As to fear man.
Queen. I would I had no need.
Lend me your sword a little: a fair sword,
I see the fingers that I hold it with
Clear in the blade, bright pink, the shell-color,
Brighter than flesh is really, curved all round.
Now men would mock if I should wear it here,
Bound under bosom with a girdle, here,
And yet I have heart enough to wear it well.
Speak to me like a woman, let me see
If I can play at man.
Chastelard. God save King James!
Queen. Would you could change now! Fie, this will not do:
Unclasp your sword; nay, the hilt hurts my side;
It sticks fast here. Unbind this knot for me:
Stoop, and you'll see it closer; thank you: there.
Now I can breathe, sir. Ah! it hurts me, though:
This was fool's play.
Chastelard. Yea, you are better so,
Without the sword; your eyes are stronger things,
Whether to save or slay.
Queen. Alas, my side!
It hurts right sorely. Is it not pitiful
Our souls should be so bound about with flesh
Even when they leap and smite with wings and feet,
The least pain plucks them back, puts out their eyes,
Turns them to tears and words? Ah, my sweet knight,
You have the better of us that weave and weep
While the blithe battle blows upon your eyes
Like rain and wind; yet I remember too
When this last year the fight at Corrichie
Reddened the rushes with stained fen-water,
I rode with my good men, and took delight,
Feeling the sweet clear wind upon my eyes,
And rainy soft smells blown upon my face
In riding: then the great fight jarred and joined,
And the sound stung me right through heart and all;
For I was here, see, gazing off the hills,

the wet air; our housings were all wet;
d not a plume stood stiffly past the ear,
t flapped between the bridle and the neck;
d under us we saw the battle go
e running water; I could see by fits
ne helm the rain fell shining off, some flag
ıp from the staff, shorn through or broken short
the man's falling: yea, one seemed to catch
e very grasp of tumbled men at men,
eth clinched in throats, hands riveted in hair,
ıring the life out with no help of swords.
d all the clamor seemed to shine, the light
med to shout as a man doth; twice I laughed —
ell you, twice my heart swelled out with thirst
be into the battle; see, fair lord,
vear it seemed I might have made a knight,
d yet the simple bracing of a belt
kes me cry out; this is too pitiful,
s dusty half of us made up with fears. —
ve you been ever quite so glad to fight
I have thought men must? pray you, speak truth.
Chastelard. Yea, when the time came, there caught hold of me
h pleasure in the head and hands and blood
may be kindled under loving lips:
ssing the ferry once to the Clerk's Field,
ind me how the plashing noise of Seine
fire into my face for joy, and how
blood kept measure with the swinging boat
we touched land, all for the sake of that
ich should be soon.

Queen. Her name, for God's love, sir;
You slew your friend for love's sake? nay, the name.
Chastelard. Faith, I forget.
Queen. Now by the faith I have
You have no faith to swear by.
Chastelard. A good sword:
We left him quiet after a thrust or twain.
Queen. I would I had been at hand, and marked them off
As the maids did when we played singing games:
You outwent me at rhyming; but for faith,
We fight best there. I would I had seen you fight.
Chastelard. I would you had; his play was worth an eye;
He made some gallant way before that pass
Which made me way through him.
Queen. Would I saw that!
How did you slay him?
Chastelard. A clean pass — this way;
Right in the side here, where the blood has root.
His wrist went round in pushing, see you, thus,
Or he had pierced me.
Queen. Yea, I see, sweet knight.
I have a mind to love you for his sake;
Would I had seen!
Chastelard. Hugues de Marsillac —
I have the name now; 'twas a goodly one
Before he changed it for a dusty name.
Queen. Talk not of death; I would hear living talk
Of good live swords and good strokes struck withal,
Brave battles and the mirth of mingling men,
Not of cold names you greet a dead man with.
You are yet young for fighting; but in fight
Have you never caught a wound?
Chastelard. Yea, twice or so:
The first time, in a little outlying field
(My first field) at the sleepy gray of dawn,

They found us drowsy, fumbling at our girths,
And rode us down by heaps; I took a hurt
Here in the shoulder.
Queen. Ah, I mind well now;
Did you not ride a day's space afterward,
Having two wounds? yea, Dandelot it was,
That Dandelot took word of it. I know,
Sitting at meat when the news came to us
I had nigh swooned but for those Florence eyes
Slanting my way with sleek lids drawn up close —
Yea, and she said, the Italian brokeress,
She said such men were good for great queens' love.
I would you might die, when you come to die,
Like a knight slain. Pray God we make good ends.
For love too, love dies hard or easily,
But some way dies on some day, ere we die.
Chastelard. You made a song once of old flowers and loves,
Will you not sing that rather? 'tis long gone
Since you sang last.
Queen. I had rather sigh than sing,
And sleep than sigh; 'tis long since verily,
But I will once more sing; ay, thus it was. [*Sings.*

1.

J'ai vu faner bien des choses,
Mainte feuille aller au vent.
En songeant aux vieilles roses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.

2.

Vois-tu dans les roses mortes
Amour qui sourit caché?
O mon amant, à nos portes
L'as-tu vu couché?

3.

As-tu vu jamais au monde
Vénus chasser et courir
Fille de l'onde, avec l'onde
Doit-elle mourir?

4.

Aux jours de neige et de givre
L'amour s'effeuille et s'endort;
Avec mai doit-il revivre,
Ou bien est-il mort?

5.

Qui sait où s'en vont les roses?
Qui sait où s'en va le vent?
En songeant à telle choses,
J'ai pleuré souvent.

I never heard yet but love made good knights,
But for pure faith, by Mary's holiness,
I think she lies about men's lips asleep,
And if one kiss or pluck her by the hand
To wake her, why God help your woman's wit,
Faith is but dead; dig her grave deep at heart,
And hide her face with cerecloths; farewell faith.
Would I could tell why I talk idly. Look,
Here come my riddle-readers. Welcome all!
Enter MURRAY, DARNLEY, RANDOLPH, LINDSAY, MORTON, *and other Lords.*
Sirs, be right welcome. Stand you by my side,
Fair cousin, I must lean on love or fall;
You are a goodly staff, sir; tall enough,
And fair enough to serve. My gentle lords,
I am full glad of God that in great grace
He hath given me such a lordly stay as this;
There is no better friended queen alive.
For the repealing of those banished men
That stand in peril yet of last year's fault,

our will; you have our seal to that.
her, we hear harsh bruits of bad report
'n up and down about our almoner;
you to this: let him be sought into:
' say lewd folk make ballads of their spleen,
w miry ways of words with talk of him;
ey have cause let him be spoken with.
ndsay. Madam, they charge him with so rank a life
e it not well this fellow were plucked out —
ng this is not an eye that doth offend,
a blurred glass it were no harm to break;
rather it were gracious to be done?
ueen. Let him be weighed, and use him as he is;
of my nature pitiful, ye know,
cannot turn my love unto a thorn
o brief space. Ye are all most virtuous;
there is goodness grafted on this land;
yet compassion is some part of God.
e is much heavier business held on hand
n one man's goodness: yea, as things fare here,
atter worth more weighing. All you wot
to choose a help to my weak feet,
mp before my face, a lord and friend
alk with me in weary ways, high up
een the wind and rain and the hot sun.
I have chosen a helper to myself,
t the best a woman ever won;
n that loves me, and a royal man,
odly love and lord for any queen.
or the peril and despite of men
ve some time tarried and withheld myself,
fearful of his worthiness nor you,
with some lady's loathing to let out
My whole heart's love; for truly this is hard,
Not like a woman's fashion, shamefacedness
And noble grave reluctance of herself
To be the tongue and cry of her own heart.
Nathless plain speech is better than much wit,
So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think
Ye have caught the mark whereat my heart is bent.
I have kept close counsel and shut up men's lips,
But lightly shall a woman's will slip out,
The foolish little wingèd will of her,
Through cheek or eye when tongue is charmed asleep.
For that good lord I have good will to wed,
I wot he knew long since which way it flew,
Even till it lit on his right wrist and sang.
Lo, here I take him by the hand: fair lords,
This is my kinsman, made of mine own blood,
I take to halve the state and services
That bow down to me, and to be my head,
My chief, my master, my sweet lord and king.
Now shall I never say "sweet cousin" more
To my dear head and husband; here, fair sir,
I give you all the heart of love in me
To gather off my lips. Did it like you,
The taste of it? sir, it was whole and true.
God save our king!
Darnley. Nay, nay, sweet love, no lord;
No king of yours though I were lord of these.
Queen. Let word be sent to all good friends of ours
To help us to be glad; England and France
Shall bear great part of our rejoicings up.

Give me your hand, dear lord; for from this time
I must not walk alone. Lords, have good cheer:
For you shall have a better face than mine
To set upon your kingly gold and show
For Scotland's forehead in the van of things.
Go with us now, and see this news set out.
[*Exeunt* QUEEN, DARNLEY, *and Lords.*
As CHASTELARD *is going out, enter* MARY BEATON.
Mary Beaton. Have you yet heard? You knew of this?
Chastelard. I know.
I was just thinking how such things were made
And were so fair as this is. Do you know
She held me here and talked,—the most sweet talk
Men ever heard of?
Mary Beaton. You hate me to the heart.
What will you do?
Chastelard. I know not: die some day,
But live as long and lightly as I can.
Will you now love me? faith, but if you do,
It were much better you were dead and hearsed.
Will you do one thing for me?
Mary Beaton. Yea, all things.
Chastelard. Speak truth a little, for God's sake: indeed
It were no harm to do. Come, will you, sweet?
Though it be but to please God.
Mary Beaton. What will you do?
Chastelard. Ay, true, I must do somewhat. Let me see:
To get between and tread upon his face—
Catch both her hands and bid men look at them,
How pure they were—I would do none of these,
Though they got wedded all the days in the year.
We may do well yet when all's come and gone.
I pray you on this wedding night of theirs
Do but one thing that I shall ask of you,
And Darnley will not hunger as I shall
For that good time. Sweet, will you swear me this?
Mary Beaton. Yea; though to do it were mortal to my soul
As the chief sin.
Chastelard. I thank you: let us go.

ACT III.—THE QUEEN.

SCENE I.—*The Queen's Chamber. Night. Lights burning in front of the bed.*

Enter CHASTELARD *and* MARY BEATON.
Mary Beaton. Be tender of your feet.
Chastelard. I shall not fail:
These ways have light enough to help a man
That walks with such stirred blood in him as mine.
Mary Beaton. I would yet plead with you to save your head:
Nay, let this be then: sir, I chide you not.
Nay, let all come. Do not abide her yet.
Chastelard. Have you read never in French books the song
Called the Duke's Song, some boy made ages back,
A song of drag-nets hauled across thwart seas
And plucked up with rent sides, and caught therein
A strange-haired woman with sad singing lips,
Cold in the cheek like any stray of sea,
And sweet to touch? so that men seeing her face,
And how she sighed out little Ahs of pain
And soft cries sobbing sideways from her mouth,
Fell in hot love, and having lain with her
Died soon? One time I could have told it through:

ow I have kissed the sea-witch on her eyes,
nd my lips ache with it: but I shall sleep
ll soon, and a good space of sleep.
Mary Beaton. Alas!
Chastelard. What makes you sigh though I be found a fool?
ou have no blame: and for my death, sweet friend,
ever could have lived long either way.
hy, as I live, the joy I have of this
ould make men mad that were not mad with love;
ear my blood sing, and my lifted heart like a springing water blown of wind
r pleasure of this deed. Now, in God's name,
wear if there be danger in delight
nust die now: if joys have deadly teeth,
have them bite my soul to death, and end
the old asp's way, Egyptian-wise; be killed
a royal purple fashion. Look, my love
ould kill me if my body were past hurt
any man's hand; and to die thereof, ay, is sweeter than all sorts of life.
ould not have her love me now, for then
hould die meanlier some time. I am safe,
e of her face, my life's end in her sight,
blood shed out about her feet — by God,
heart feels drunken when I think of it.
e you, she will not rid herself of me,
t though she slay me: her sweet lips and life
ll smell of my spilt blood.
Mary Beaton. Give me good night.
Chastelard. Yea, and good thanks.
[*Exit* MARY BEATON.
re is the very place:
re has her body bowed the pillows in,
d here her head thrust under made the sheet
Smell soft of her mixed hair and spice: even here
Her arms pushed back the coverlet, pulled here
The golden silken curtain halfway in,
It may be, and made room to lean out loose,
Fair tender fallen arms. Now, if God would,
Doubtless he might take pity on my soul
To give me three clear hours, and then red hell
Snare me forever: this were merciful:
If I were God now, I should do thus much.
I must die next, and this were not so hard
For him to let me eat sweet fruit, and die
With my lips sweet from it. For one shall have
This fare for common days'-bread, which to me
Should be a touch kept always on my sense
To make hell soft, yea, the keen pain of hell
Soft as the loosening of wound arms in sleep.
Ah, love is good, and the worst part of it
More than all things but death. She will be here
In some small while, and see me face to face
That am to give up life for her, and go
Where a man lies with all his loves put out
And his lips full of earth. I think on her,
And the old pleasure stings and makes half-tears
Under mine eyelids. Prithee, love, come fast,
That I may die soon; yea, some kisses through,
I shall die joyfully enough, so God
Keep me alive till then. I feel her feet
Coming far off; now must I hold my heart,
Steadying my blood to see her patiently.
[*Hides himself by the bed.*

Enter the QUEEN *and* DARNLEY.

Queen. Nay, now go back: I have sent off my folk,
Maries and all. Pray you, let be my hair;
I cannot twist the gold thread out of it
That you wound in so close. Look, here it clings:
Ah! now you mar my hair unwinding it.
Do me no hurt, sir.

Darnley. I would do you ease;
Let me stay here.

Queen. Nay, will you go, my lord?

Darnley. Eh? would you use me as a girl does fruit,
Touched with her mouth and pulled away for game
To look thereon ere her lips feed? but see,
By God, I fare the worse for you.

Queen. Fair sir,
Give me this hour to watch with and say prayers:
You have not faith — it needs me to say prayers,
That with commending of this deed to God
I may get grace for it.

Darnley. Why, lacks it grace?
Is not all wedlock gracious of itself?

Queen. Nay, that I know not of. Come, sweet, be hence.

Darnley. You have a sort of jewel in your neck
That's like mine here.

Queen. Keep off your hands and go:
You have no courtesy to be a king.

Darnley. Well, I will go: nay, but I thwart you not.
Do as you will, and get you grace; farewell,
And for my part, grace keep this watch with me!
For I need grace to bear with you so much. [*Exit.*

Queen. So, he is forth. Let me behold myself;
I am too pale to be so hot; I marvel
So little color should be bold in the face
When the blood is not quieted. I have
But a brief space to cool my thoughts upon.
If one should wear the hair thus heaped and curled
Would it look best? or this way in the neck?
Could one ungirdle in such wise one's heart,
[*Taking off her girdle.*
And ease it inwards as the waist is eased
By slackening of the slid clasp on it!
How soft the silk is — gracious color too;
Violet shadows like new veins thrown up
Each arm, and gold to fleck the faint sweet green
Where the wrist lies thus eased. I am right glad
I have no maids about to hasten me:
So I will rest, and see my hair shed down
On either silk side of my woven sleeves,
Get some new way to bind it back with — yea,
Fair mirror-glass, I am well ware of you,
Yea, I know that, I am quite beautiful.
How my hair shines! — Fair face, be friends with me,
And I will sing to you: look in my face
Now, and your mouth must help the song in mine.

Alys la châtelaine
Voit venir de par Seine
Thiébault le capitaine
Qui parle ainsi:

Was that the wind in the casement? nay, no more
But the comb drawn through half my hissing hair
Laid on my arms — yet my flesh moved at it.

Dans ma camaille
Plus de clou qui vaille,
Dans ma cotte-maille
Plus de fer aussi.

Ah, but I wrong the ballad-verse: what's good
In such frayed fringes of old rhymes, to make

heir broken burden lag with us? me-
seems
could be sad now if I fell to think
he least sad thing; ay, that sweet
lady's fool,
ool sorrow, would make merry with
mine eyes
or a small thing. Nay, but I will
keep glad.
or shall old sorrow be false friends
with me.
ut my first wedding was not like to
this —
air faces then and laughter and sweet
game,
nd a pale little mouth that clung on
mine
hen I had kissed him by the faded
eyes
nd either thin cheek beating with
faint blood.
ell, he was sure to die soon; I do
think
e would have given his body to be
slain,
aving embraced my body. Now, God
knows,
have no man to do as much for me
s give me but a little of his blood
o fill my beauty from, though I go
down
ale to my grave for want — I think
not. Pale —
am too pale surely — Ah!
*Sees him in the glass, coming for-
ward.*
Chastelard. Be not afraid.
Queen. Saint Mary! what a shaken
wit have I!
ay, is it you? who let you through
the doors?
here be my maidens? which way got
you in?
ay, but stand up, kiss not my hands
so hard;
y God's fair body, if you but breathe
on them
ou are just dead and slain at once.
What adder
as bit you mirthful mad? for by this
light
man to have his head laughed off for
mirth
Is no great jest. Lay not your eyes on
me;
What! would you not be slain?
Chastelard. I pray you, madam,
Bear with me a brief space, and let me
speak.
I will not touch your garments even,
nor speak
But in soft wise, and look some other
way,
If that it like you; for I came not here
For pleasure of the eyes; yet, if you
will,
Let me look on you.
Queen. As you will, fair sir.
Give me that coif to gather in my
hair —
I thank you — and my girdle — nay,
that side.
Speak, if you will: yet if you will be
gone,
Why, you shall go, because I hate you
not.
You know that I might slay you with
my lips,
With calling out? but I will hold my
peace.
Chastelard. Yea, do some while. I
had a thing to say;
I know not wholly what thing. O my
sweet,
I am come here to take farewell of love
That I have served, and life that I have
lived
Made up of love, here in the sight of
you
That all my life's time I loved more
than God,
Who quits me thus with bitter death
for it.
For you well know that I must shortly
die,
My life being wound about you as it is,
Who love me not; yet do not hate me,
sweet,
But tell me wherein I came short of
love;
For doubtless I came short of a just
love,
And fell in some fool's fault that anger-
ed you.
Now that I talk men dig my grave for
me

Out in the rain, and in a little while
I shall be thrust in some sad space of earth
Out of your eyes; and you, O you my love,
A newly wedded lady full of mirth
And a queen girt with all good people's love,
You shall be fair and merry in all your days.
Is this so much for me to have of you?
Do but speak, sweet: I know these are no words
A man should say though he were now to die,
But I am as a child for love, and have
No strength at heart; yea, I am afraid to die,
For the harsh dust will lie upon my face
Too thick to see you pass. Look how I love you;
I did so love you always, that your face
Seen through my sleep has wrung mine eyes to tears
For pure delight in you. Why do you thus?
You answer not, but your lips curl in twain
And your face moves; there, I shall make you weep,
And be a coward too; it were much best
I should be slain.

Queen. Yea, best such folk were slain;
Why should they live to cozen fools with lies?
You would swear now you have used me faithfully;
Shall I not make you swear? I am ware of you:
You will not do it, nay, for the fear of God
You will not swear. Come, I am merciful;
God made a foolish woman, making me,
And I have loved your mistress with whole heart;
Say you do love her, you shall marry her
And she give thanks: yet I could wish your love
Had not so lightly chosen forth a face;
For your fair sake, because I hate you not.

Chastelard. What is to say? why, you do surely know
That since my days were counted for a man's
I have loved you; yea, how past help and sense,
Whatever thing was bitter to my love,
I have loved you; how when I rode in war
Your face went floated in among men's helms,
Your voice went through the shriek of slipping swords;
Yea, and I never have loved women well,
Seeing always in my sight I had your lips
Curled over, red and sweet; and the soft space
Of carven brows, and splendor of great throat
Swayed lily-wise: what pleasure should one have
To wind his arms about a lesser love?
I have seen you; why, this were joy enough
For God's eyes up in heaven, only to see
And to come never nearer than I am.
Why, it was in my flesh, my bone and blood,
Bound in my brain, to love you; yea, and writ
All my heart over: if I would lie to you,
I doubt I could not lie. Ah, you see now,
You know now well enough; yea, there, sweet love,
Let me kiss there.

Queen. I love you best of them.
Clasp me quite round till your lips cleave on mine, —
False mine, that did you wrong. Forgive them dearly,
As you are sweet to them; for by love's love
I am not that evil woman in my heart
That laughs at a rent faith. O Chastelard,
Since this was broken to me of your new love

I have not seen the face of a sweet hour.
Nay, if there be no pardon in a man,
What shall a woman have for loving him?
Pardon me, sweet.
Chastelard. Yea, so I pardon you,
And this side now; the first way. Would God please
To slay me so! who knows how he might please?
Now I am thinking, if you know it not,
How I might kill you, kiss your breath clean out,
And take your soul to bring mine through to God
That our two souls might close and be one twain
Or a twain one, and God himself want skill
To set us either severally apart.
Oh, you must overlive me many years,
And many years my soul be in waste hell;
But when some time God can no more refrain
To lay death like a kiss across your lips,
And great lords bear you clothed with funeral things,
And your crown girded over deadly brows,
Then after all your happy reach of life
For pity you shall touch me with your eyes,
Remembering love was fellow with my flesh
Here in sweet earth, and make me well of love,
And heal my many years with piteousness.
Queen. You talk too sadly and too feignedly.
Chastelard. Too sad, but not too feigned; I am sad
That I shall die here without feigning thus;
And without feigning I were fain to live.
Queen. Alas, you will be taken presently,
And then you are but dead. Pray you, get hence.
Chastelard. I will not.
Queen. Nay, for God's love be away;
You will be slain, and I get shame. God's mercy!
You were stark mad to come here; kiss me, sweet.
Oh, I do love you more than all men! yea,
Take my lips to you, close mine eyes up fast,
So you leave hold a little: there, for pity,
Abide now, and to-morrow come to me.
Nay, lest one see red kisses in my throat —
Dear God! what shall I give you to be gone?
Chastelard. I will not go. Look, here's full night grown up;
Why should I seek to sleep away from here?
The place is soft, and the lights burn for sleep;
Be not you moved; I shall lie well enough.
Queen. You are utterly undone. Sweet, by my life,
You shall be saved with taking ship at once.
For if you stay this foolish love's hour out
There is not ten days' likely life in you.
This is no choice.
Chastelard. Nay, for I will not go.
Queen. Oh, me! this is that Bayard's blood of yours
That makes you mad; yea, and you shall not stay.
I do not understand. Mind, you must die.
Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of me;
I shall be deadly to you.
Chastelard. Yea, I saw that;
But I saw not that when my death's day came
You could be quite so sweet to me.
Queen. My love!
If I could kiss my heart's root out on you,
You would taste love hid at the core of me.
Chastelard. Kiss me twice more. This beautiful bowed head

That has such hair with kissing ripples in,
And shivering soft eyelashes and brows
With fluttered blood; but laugh a little, sweetly,
That I may see your sad mouth's laughing look
I have used sweet hours in seeing. Oh, will you weep?
I pray you, do not weep.
Queen. Nay, dear, I have
No tears in me; I never shall weep much,
I think, in all my life: I have wept for wrath
Sometimes, and for mere pain, but for love's pity
I cannot weep at all. I would to God
You loved me less; I give you all I can
For all this love of yours, and yet I am sure
I shall live out the sorrow of your death
And be glad afterwards. You know I am sorry.
I should weep now; forgive me for your part.
God made me hard, I think. Alas! you see
I had fain been other than I am.
Chastelard. Yea, love.
Comfort your heart. What way am I to die?
Queen. Ah! will you go yet, sweet?
Chastelard. No, by God's body.
You will not see? how shall I make you see?
Look, it may be love was a sort of curse
Made for my plague, and mixed up with my days
Somewise in their beginning; or indeed
A bitter birth begotten of sad stars
At mine own body's birth, that heaven might make
My life taste sharp where other men drank sweet;
But whether in heavy body or broken soul,
I know it must go on to be my death.
There was the matter of my fate in me
When I was fashioned first, and given such life
As goes with a sad end; no fault but God's.
Yea, and for all this I am not penitent;
You see I am perfect in these sins of mine,
I have my sins writ in a book to read;
Now I shall die, and be well done with this.
But I am sure you cannot see such things,
God knows I blame you not.
Queen. What shall be said?
You know most well that I am sorrowful.
But you should chide me. Sweet, you have seen fair wars,
Have seen men slain and ridden red in them;
Why will you die a chamberer's death like this?
What! shall no praise be written of my knight,
For my fame's sake?
Chastelard. Nay, no great praise, I think;
I will no more; what should I do with death,
Though I died goodly out of sight of you?
I have gone once: here am I set now, sweet,
Till the end come. That is your husband, hark!
He knocks at the outer door. Kiss me just once.
You know now all you have to say. Nay, love,
Let him come quickly.
Enter DARNLEY, *and afterwards the* MARIES.
Darnley. Yea, what thing is here?
Ay, this was what the doors shut fast upon—
Ay, trust you to be fast at prayer, my sweet?
By God, I have a mind—
Chastelard. What mind then, sir?
A liar's lewd mind, to coin sins for jest.
Because you take me in such wise as this?
Look you, I have to die soon, and I swear,
That am no liar, but a free knight and lord,
I shall die clear of any sin to you,

ve that I came for no good will of mine;
am no carle, I play fair games with faith,
ıd by mine honor for my sake I swear
ay but truth; for no man's sake save mine,
st I die shamed. Madam, I pray you say
ım no liar; you know me what I am,
sinful man and shortly to be slain,
ıat in a simple insolence of love
ıve stained with a fool's eyes your holy hours
ıd with a fool's words put your pity out;
athless you know if I be liar or no,
herefore for God's sake give me grace to swear
ea, for mine too) how past all praise you are,
ıd stainless of all shame; and how all men
e, saying you are not most good and innocent,
a, the one thing good as God.
Darnley. O sir, we know
ou can swear well, being taken; you fair French
ıre swallow God's name for a lewd love-sake
it were water. Nay, we know, we know;
ve your sweet breath now, lest you lack it soon;
e are simple, we; we have not heard of you.
ıdam, by God you are well shamed in him:
, trust you to be fingering in one's face,
y with one's neck-chain? ah, your maiden's man,
relic of your people's?
Chastelard. Hold your peace,
I will set an edge on your own lie
ıll scar yourself. Madam, have out your guard:
s time I were got hence.
Queen. Sweet Hamilton,
ld you my hand, and help me to sit down.

O Henry, I am beaten from my wits!
Let me have time, and live; call out my people —
Bring forth some armed guard to lay hold on him;
But see no man be slain. Sirs, hide your swords;
I will not have men slain.
Darnley. What! is this true?
Call the queen's people — help the queen there, you —
Ho, sirs! come in.
Enter some with the Guard.
Queen. Lay hold upon that man;
Bear him away, but see he have no hurt.
Chastelard. Into your hands I render up myself
With a free heart; deal with me how you list,
But courteously, I pray you. Take my sword.
Farewell, great queen; the sweetness in your look
Makes life look bitter on me. Farewell, sirs. [*He is taken out.*
Darnley. Yea, pluck him forth, and have him hanged by dawn;
He shall find bed enow to sleep. God's love!
That such a knave should be a knight like this!
Queen. Sir, peace awhile; this shall be as I please;
Take patience to you. Lords, I pray you see
All be done goodly; look they wrong him not.
Carmichael, you shall sleep with me to-night;
I am sorely shaken, even to the heart.
Fair lords,
I thank you for your care. Sweet, stay by me.

ACT IV. — MURRAY.

SCENE I. — *The Queen's Lodging at St. Andrew's.*

The QUEEN *and the four* MARIES.

Queen. Why will you break my heart with praying to me?

You Seyton, you Carmichael, you have wits,
You are not all run to tears; you do not think
It is my wrath or will that whets this axe
Against his neck?
Mary Seyton. Nay, these three weeks agone
I said the queen's wrath was not sharp enough
To shear a neck.
Queen. Sweet, and you did me right,
And look you, what my mercy bears to fruit,
Danger and deadly speech and a fresh fault
Before the first was cool in people's lips;
A goodly mercy: and I wash hands of it.—
Speak you, there; have you ever found me sharp?
You weep and whisper with sloped necks and heads
Like two sick birds; do you think shame of me?
Nay, I thank God none can think shame of me;
But am I bitter, think you, to men's faults?
I think I am too merciful, too meek:
Why, if I could I would yet save this man;
'Tis just boy's madness; a soft stripe or two
Would do to scourge the fault in his French blood.
I would fain let him go. You, Hamilton,
You have a heart thewed harder than my heart;
When mine would threat it sighs, and wrath in it
Has a bird's flight and station, starves before
It can well feed or fly: my pulse of wrath
Sounds tender as the running down of tears.
You are the hardest woman I have known,
Your blood has frost and cruel gall in it,
You hold men off with bitter lips and eyes—
Such maidens should serve England; now, perfay,
I doubt you would have got him slain at once.
Come, would you not? come, would you let him live?
Mary Hamilton. Yes—I think yes; I cannot tell; maybe
I would have seen him punished.
Queen. Look you now,
There's maiden mercy; I would have him live—
For all my wifehood, maybe I weep too:
Here's a mere maiden falls to slaying at once,
Small shrift for her; God keep us from such hearts!
I am a queen too that would have him live,
But one that has no wrong and is no queen,
She would— What are you saying there, you twain?
Mary Carmichael. I said a queen's face and so fair an one's
Would lose no grace for giving grace away;
That gift comes back upon the mouth it left,
And makes it sweeter, and sets fresh red on it.
Queen. This comes of sonnets when the dance draws breath;
These talking times will make a dearth of grace.
But you—what ails you that your lips are shut?
Weep, if you will; here are four friends of yours
To weep as fast for pity of your tears.
Do you desire him dead? nay, but men say
He was your friend, he fought them on your side,
He made you songs—God knows what songs he made!
Speak you for him a little: will you not?
Mary Beaton. Madam, I have no words.

Queen. No words? no pity—
ve you no mercies for such men?
God help!
seems I am the meekest heart on
earth—
a, the one tender woman left alive,
d knew it not. I will not let him
live,
r all my pity of him.
Mary Beaton. Nay, but, madam,
r God's love look a little to this
thing.
you do slay him you are but shamed
to death;
men will cry upon you, women
weep,
rning your sweet name bitter with
their tears;
d shame grow up out of your mem-
ory
d burn his face that would speak
well of you;
u shall have no good word nor pity,
none,
l some such end be fallen upon you:
nay,
n but cold, I knew I had no words.
ill keep silence.
Queen. Yea, now, as I live,
vist not of it: troth, he shall not
die.
you, I am pitiful, compassionate,
vould not have men slain for my
love's sake,
if he live to do me three times
wrong,
y then my shame would grow up
green and red
e any flower. I am not whole at
heart;
faith, I wot not what such things
should be.
oubt it is but dangerous; he must
die.
Mary Beaton. Yea, but you will not
slay him.
Queen. Swear me that,
say he shall not die for your oath's
sake.
at will you do for grief when he is
dead?
Mary Beaton. Nothing for grief, but
hold my peace and die.

Queen. Why, for your sweet sake one
might let him live;
But the first fault was a green seed of
shame,
And now the flower, and deadly fruit
will come
With apple-time in autumn. By my
life,
I would they had slain him there in
Edinburgh;
But I reprieve him; lo the thank I get,
To set the base folk muttering like
smoked bees
Of shame and love, and how love comes
of shame,
And how the queen loves shame that
comes of love;
Yet I say naught and go about my
ways,
And this mad fellow that I respited
Being forth and free, lo now the second
time
Ye take him by my bed in wait. Now
see
If I can get goodwill to pardon him;
With what a face may I crave leave of
men
To respite him, being young and a good
knight
And mad for perfect love? shall I go
say,—
*Dear lords, because ye took him shame-
fully,*
*Let him not die; because his fault is
foul,*
Let him not die; because if he do live
I shall be held a harlot of all men,
*I pray you, sweet sirs, that he may not
die?*
Mary Beaton. Madam, for me I would
not have him live;
Mine own heart's life was ended with
my fame,
And my life's breath will shortly follow
them;
So that I care not much; for you wot
well
I have lost love and shame and fame,
and all
To no good end; nor while he had his
life
Have I got good of him that was my
love,

Save that for courtesy (which may God quit)
He kissed me once as one might kiss for love
Out of great pity for me; saving this,
He never did me grace in all his life.
And when you have slain him, madam, it may be
I shall get grace of him in some new way
In a new place, if God have care of us.
Queen. Bid you my brother to me presently. [*Exeunt Maries.*
And yet the thing is pitiful; I would
There were some way. To send him overseas,
Out past the long firths to the cold keen sea
Where the sharp sound is that one hears up here —
Or hold him in strong prison till he died —
He would die shortly — or to set him free
And use him softly till his brains were healed —
There is no way. Now never while I live
Shall we twain love together any more,
Nor sit at rhyme as we were used to do,
Nor each kiss other only with the eyes
A great way off ere hand or lip could reach;
There is no way.
Enter Murray. O, you are welcome, sir;
You know what need I have; but I praise heaven,
Having such need, I have such help of you.
I do believe no queen God ever made
Was better holpen than I look to be.
What! if two brethren love not heartily,
Who shall be good to either one of them?
Murray. Madam, I have great joy of your good will.
Queen. I pray you, brother, use no courtesies:
I have some fear you will not suffer me
When I shall speak. Fear is a fool, I think,
Yet hath he wit enow to fool my wits,
Being but a woman's. Do not answer me
Till you shall know; yet if you have a word
I shall be fain to hear it; but I think
There is no word to help me; no man's word.
There be two things yet that should do me good, —
A speeding arm and a great heart. My lord,
I am soft-spirited as women are,
And ye wot well I have no harder heart:
Yea, with my will I would not slay a thing,
But all should live right sweetly if I might;
So that man's blood-spilling lies hard on me.
I have a work yet for mine honor's sake,
A thing to do, God wot I know not how,
Nor how to crave it of you: nay, by heaven,
I will not shame myself to show it you:
I have not heart.
Murray. Why, if it may be done
With any honor, or with good men's excuse,
I shall well do it.
Queen. I would I wist that well.
Sir, do you love me?
Murray. Yea, you know I do.
Queen. In faith, you should well love me, for I love
The least man in your following for your sake
With a whole sister's heart.
Murray. Speak simply, madam;
I must obey you, being your bounden man.
Queen. Sir, so it is you know what things have been,
Even to the endangering of mine innocent name,
And by no fault, but by men's evil will.
If Chastelard have trial openly,
I am but shamed.
Murray. This were a wound indeed,
If your good name should lie upon his lip.

Queen. I will the judges put him not to plead,
r my fame's sake; he shall not answer them.
Murray. What! think you he will speak against your fame?
Queen. I know not; men might feign belief of him
r hate of me; it may be he will speak;
brief, I will not have him held to proof.
Murray. Well, if this be, what good is to be done?
Queen. Is there no way but he must speak to them,
ng had to trial plainly?
Murray. I think, none.
Queen. Now mark, my lord; I swear he will not speak.
Murray. It were the best if you could make that sure.
Queen. There is one way. Look, sir, he shall not do it:
ill not, or will not, either is one way;
peak as I would have you understand.
Murray. Let me not guess at you; speak certainly.
Queen. You will not mind me: let him be removed;
ke means to get me surety: there be means.
Murray. So, in your mind, I have to slay the man?
Queen. Is there a mean for me to save the man?
Murray. Truly I see no mean except your love.
Queen. What love is that, my lord? what think you of,
king of love and of love's mean in me
l of your guesses and of slaying him?
y, I say naught, have naught to say: God help me!
d you but take surety of the man, him removed.
Murray. Come, come, be clear with me;
a bid me to despatch him privily.

Queen. God send me sufferance! I bid you, sir?
Nay, do not go: what matter if I did?
Nathless I never bade you; no, by God.
Be not so wroth; you are my brother born;
Why do you dwell upon me with such eyes?
For love of God you should not bear me hard.
Murray. What! are you made of flesh?
Queen. Oh, now I see.
You had rather lose your wits to do me harm
Than keep sound wits to help me.
Murray. It is right strange;
The worst man living hath some fear, some love,
Holds somewhat dear a little for life's sake,
Keeps fast to some compassion; you have none;
You know of nothing that remembrance knows
To make you tender. I must slay the man?
Nay, I will do it.
Queen. Do, if you be not mad.
I am sorry for him; and he must needs die.
I would I were assured you hate me not:
I have no heart to slay him by my will.
I pray you think not bitterly of me.
Murray. Is it your pleasure such a thing were done?
Queen. Yea, by God's body is it, certainly.
Murray. Nay, for your love then, and for honor's sake,
This thing must be.
Queen. Yea, should I set you on?
Even for my love then, I beseech you, sir,
To seek him out, and lest he prate of me
To put your knife into him ere he come forth:
Meseems this were not such wild work to do.

Murray. I'll have him in the prison taken off.
Queen. I am bounden to you, even for my name's sake,
When that is done.
Murray. I pray you fear me not
Farewell. I would such things were not to do,
Or not for me; yea, not for any man.
[*Exit.*
Queen. Alas! what honor have I to give thanks?
I would he had denied me: I had held my peace
Thenceforth forever; but h wrung out the word,
Caught it before my lip was fain of it—
It was his fault to put it in my mind,
Yea, and to feign a loathing of his fault.
Now is he about devising my love's death,
And nothing loath. Nay, since he must needs die,
Would he were dead and come alive again
And I might keep him safe! He doth live now,
And I may do what love I will to him;
But by to-morrow he will be stark dead,
Stark slain and dead; and for no sort of love
Will he so much as kiss me half a kiss.
Were this to do I would not do it again.
Re-enter MURRAY.
What! have you taken order? is it done?
It were impossible to do so soon.
Nay, answer me.
Murray. Madam, I will not do it.
Queen. How did you say? I pray, sir, speak again:
I know not what you said.
Murray. I say I will not;
I have thought thereof, and have made up my heart
To have no part in this: look you to it.
Queen. O, for God's sake! you will not have me shamed?
Murray. I will not dip my hand into your sin.
Queen. It were a good deed to deliver me.
I am but woman, of one blood with you,
A feeble woman; put me not to shame;
I pray you of your pity do me right.
Yea, and no fleck of blood shall cleave to you
For a just deed.
Murray. I know not: I will none.
Queen. Oh, you will never let him speak to them
To put me in such shame? Why, I should die
Out of pure shame and mine own burning blood;
Yea, my face feels the shame lay hold on it,
I am half burnt already in my thought.
Take pity of me. Think how shame slays a man;
How shall I live, then? would you have me dead?
I pray you for our dead dear father's sake,
Let not men mock at me. Nay, if he speak,
I shall be sung in mine own towns. Have pity.
What! will you let men stone me in the ways?
Murray. Madam, I shall take pains the best I may
To save your honor, and what thing lieth in me
That will I do; but no close manslayings.
I will not have God's judgment gripe my throat
When I am dead, to hale me into hell
For a man's sake slain on this wise. Take heed.
See you to that. [*Exit.*
Queen. One of you maidens there
Bid my lord hither. Now, by Mary's soul,
He shall not die and bring me into shame.
There's treason in you like a fever, hot,
My holy-natured brother, cheek and eye:
You look red through with it; sick, honor-sick,

ecked with the blain of treason,
leper-like, —
scrupulous fair traitor with clean
lips.
one should sue to hell to do him
good,
were as brotherly holpen as I am.
is man must live, and say no harm
of me;
nay reprieve and cast him forth;
yea, so —
is were the best; or if he die mid-
way —
a, any thing, so that he die not here.
[*To the* MARIES *within.*
ch hither Darnley. Nay, ye gape
on me —
iat! doth he sleep, or feeds, or plays
at games?
ıy, I would see him; I am weary for
his sake;
my lord in. — Nathless he will but
chide;
y, fleer and laugh: what should one
say to him?
ere were some word if one could hit
on it;
ne way to close with him: I wot not.
— Sir,
Enter DARNLEY.
ase it your love I have a suit to you.
Darnley. What sort of suit?
Queen. Nay, if you be not friends —
ave no suit towards mine enemies.
Darnley. Eh! do I look now like
your enemy?
Queen. You have a way of peering
under brow
not like. If you see any thing
ne that irks you, I will painfully
or to lose it: do but show me favor,
as I am your faithful humble wife
s foolishness shall be removed
in me.
Darnley. Why do you laugh and
mock me with stretched hands?
h, I see no such thing.
Queen. That is well seen.
ne, I will take my heart between my
lips,
it not hardly. Sir, my suit begins;
t you would please to make me that
I am,
(In sooth I think I am) mistress and
queen
Of mine own people.
Darnley. Why, this is no suit;
This is a simple matter, and your own.
Queen. It was, before God made you
king of me.
Darnley. No king, by God's grace;
were I such a king,
I'd sell my kingdom for six roods of rye.
Queen. You are too sharp upon my
words; I would
Have leave of you to free a man con-
demned.
Darnley. What man is that, sweet?
Queen. Such a mad poor man
As God desires us use not cruelly.
Darnley. Is there no name a man
may call him by?
Queen. Nay, my fair master, what
fair game is this?
Why, you do know him: it is Chaste-
lard.
Darnley. Ay, is it soothly?
Queen. By my life, it is;
Sweet, as you tender me, so pardon him.
Darnley. As he doth tender you, so
pardon me;
For, if it were the mean to save my life,
He should not live a day.
Queen. Nay, shall not he?
Darnley. Look what an evil wit old
Fortune hath:
Why, I came here to get his time cut
off.
This second fault is meat for lewd
men's mouths;
You were best have him slain at once:
'tis hot.
Queen. Give me the warrant, and sit
down, my lord.
Why, I will sign it; what, I understand
How this must be. Should not my
name stand here?
Darnley. Yea, there, and here the
seal.
Queen. Ay, so you say.
Shall I say too what I am thinking of?
Darnley. Do, if you will.
Queen. I do not like your suit.
Darnley. 'Tis of no Frenchman fash-
ion.
Queen. No, God wot;

'Tis nowise great men's fashion in French land
To clap a headsman's tabard on their backs.
Darnley. No, madam?
Queen. No; I never wist of that.
Is it a month gone I did call you lord?
I chose you by no straying stroke of sight,
But with my heart to love you heartily.
Did I wrong then? did mine eye draw my heart?
I know not; sir, it may be I did wrong:
And yet to see you I should call it right
Even yet to love you; and would choose again,
Again to choose you.
Darnley. There, I love you too,
Take that for sooth, and let me take this hence.
Queen. O, do you think I hold you off with words?
Why, take it then; there is my handwriting,
And here the hand that you shall slay him with.
'Tis a fair hand, a maiden-colored one:
I doubt yet it has never slain a man.
You never fought yet save for game, I wis.
Nay, thank me not, but have it from my sight;
Go and make haste for fear he be got forth:
It may be such a man is dangerous;
Who knows what friends he hath? and by my faith
I doubt he hath seen some fighting, I do fear
He hath fought and shed men's blood; ye are wise men
That will not leave such dangerous things alive;
'Twere well he died the sooner for your sakes.
Pray you make haste; it is not fit he live.
Darnley. What! will you let him die so easily?
Queen. Why, God have mercy! what way should one take
To please such people? there's some cunning way,
Something I miss, out of my simple soul
What! must one say "Beseech you do no harm,"
Or "for my love, sweet cousins, be not hard,"
Or "let him live but till the vane come round"—
Will such things please you? well then have your way;
Sir, I desire you, kneeling down with tears,
With sighs and tears, fair sir, require of you,
Considering of my love I bear this man
Just for my love's sake let him not be hanged
Before the sundown; do thus much for me,
To have a queen's prayers follow after you.
Darnley. I know no need for you to gibe at me.
Queen. Alack! what heart then shall I have to jest?
There is no woman jests in such a wise—
For the shame's sake I pray you hang him not,
Seeing how I love him, save indeed in silk,
Sweet twisted silk of my sad handiwork.
Nay, and you will not do so much for me;
You vex your lip, biting the blood and all:
Were this so hard, and you compassionate?
I am in sore case then, and will weep indeed.
Darnley. What do you mean to cast such gibes at me?
Queen. Woe's me, and will you turn my tears to thorns?
Nay, set your eyes a little in my face:
See, do I weep? what will you make of me?
Will you not swear I love this prisoner
Ye are wise, and ye will have it; yet for me
I wist not of it. We are but feeble fools,
And love may catch us when we lie asleep,

l yet God knows we know not this
a whit.
ıe, look on me, swear you believe
it not:
ıay be I will take your word for that.
arnley. Do you not love him? nay,
but verily?
ueen. Now then, make answer to me
verily,
ich of us twain is wiser? for my
part
ll not swear I love not, if you will;
be wise men and many men, my
lords,
ye will have me love him, ye will
swear
t I do love him; who shall say ye
lie?
k on your paper; maybe I have
wept:
btless I love your hanged man in
my heart.
at! is the writing smutched or gone
awry?
blurred — ay, surely so much — with
one tear,
little sharp tear strayed on it by
chance?
ıe, come, the man is deadly danger-
ous;
him die presently.
arnley. You do not love him;
l, yet he need not die; it were right
hard
ıang the fool because you love him
not.
ueen. You have keen wits and there-
to courtesy
catch me with. No, let this man
not die;
ere no such perpetual praise to you
be his doomsman, and in doglike
wise
his brief life in twain.
arnley. Truly it were not.
ueen. Then for your honor and my
love of you
I do love you! but you know not,
sweet,
shall see how much), think you for
their sake
nay go free?
arnley. How, freely forth of us?
But yet he loves you, and being mad
with love
Makes matter for base mouths to chew
upon:
'Twere best he live not yet.
Queen. Will you say that?
Darnley. Why should he live to breed
you bad reports?
Let him die first.
Queen. Sweet, for your sake, not so.
Darnley. Fret not yourself to pity;
let him die.
Queen. Come, let him live a little; it
shall be
A grace to us.
Darnley. By God, he dies at once.
Queen. Now, by God's mother, if I
respite him,
Though you were all the race of you in
one,
And had more tongues than hairs to
cry on me,
He should not lose a hair.
Darnley. This is mere mercy —
But you thank God you love him not a
whit?
Queen. It shall be what it please;
and if I please
It shall be any thing. Give me the war-
rant.
Darnley. Nay, for your sake and love
of you, not I,
To make it dangerous.
Queen. Oh, God's pity, sir!
You are tender of me; will you serve
me so,
Against mine own will, shew me so
much love,
Do me good service that I loath being
done,
Out of pure pity?
Darnley. Nay, your word shall stand.
Queen. What makes you gape so
beastlike after blood?
Were you not bred up on some hang-
man's hire,
And dieted with fleshmeats at his hand,
And fed into a fool? Give me that
paper.
Darnley. Now for that word I will not.
Queen. Nay, sweet love,
For your own sake be just a little wise;
Come, I beseech you.

Darnley. Pluck not at my hands.
Queen. No, that I will not: I am
brain-broken, mad;
Pity my madness for sweet marriage-
sake
And my great love's; I love you to say
this;
I would not have you cross me, out of
love.
But for true love should I not chafe
indeed?
And now I do not.
Darnley. Yea, and late you chid,
You chafed and jested and blew soft
and hard—
No, for that "fool" you shall not fool
me so.
Queen. You are no churl, sweet, will
you see me weep?
Look, I weep now; be friends with my
poor tears.
Think each of them beseeches you of
love,
And hath some tongue to cry on you
for love,
And speak soft things; for that which
loves not you
Is none of mine, not though they grow
of grief
And grief of you; be not too hard with
them.
You would not of your own heart slay
a man;
Nay, if you will, in God's name make
me weep,
I will not hate you; but at heart, sweet
lord,
Be not at heart my sweet heart's enemy.
If I had many mighty men to friend,
I would not plead too lovingly with you
To have your love.
Darnley. Why, yet you have my love.
Queen. Alas! what shall mine ene-
mies do to me
If I be used so hardly of my friends?
Come, sir, you hate me; yet for all your
hate
You cannot have such heart.
Darnley. What sort of heart?
I have no heart to be used shamefully,
If you mean that.
Queen. Would God I loved you not!
You are too hard to be used lovingly.
Darnley. You are moved too muc
for such a little love
As you bear me.
Queen. God knows you do me wrong
God knows the heart, sweet, that I lov
you with.
Hark you, fair sir, I'd have all wel
with you;
Do you not fear at sick men's time o
night
What end may come? are you so sur
of heart?
Is not your spirit surprisable in sleep?
Have you no evil dreams? Nay, loo
you, love,
I will not be flung off your heart an
hand,
I am no snake: but tell me for your love
Have you no fancies how these thing
will end
In the pit's mouth? how all life-deed
will look
At the grave's edge that lets men int
hell?
For my part, who am weak and woman
eyed,
It turns my soul to tears: I doubt thi
blood
Fallen on our faces when we twain ar
dead
Will scar and burn them: yea, fo
heaven is sweet,
And loves sweet deeds that smell no
of spilt blood.
Let us not kill: God that made merc
first
Pities the pitiful for their deed's sake.
Darnley. Get you some painting
with a cheek like this
You'll find no faith in listeners.
Queen. How, fair lord?
Darnley. I say that looking with thi
face of yours
None shall believe you holy. What
you talk,
Take mercy in your mouth, eat hol
ness,
Put God under your tongue, and fee
on heaven,
With fear and faith and—faith, I kno
not what—
And look as though you stood and sa
men slain

make you game and laughter: nay, your eyes
reaten as unto blood. What will you do
make men take your sweet word? Pitiful —
u are pitiful as he that's hired for death,
d loves the slaying yet better than the hire.
Queen. You are wise that live to threat and tell me so:
you love life too much?
Darnley. Oh, now you are sweet,
ht tender now: you love not blood nor death,
u are too tender.
Queen. Yea, too weak, too soft:
eet, do not mock me, for my love's sake; see
w soft a thing I am. Will you be hard?
e heart you have, has it no sort of fear?
Darnley. Take off your hand, and let me go my way,
l do my deed; and when the doing is past
ll come home, and teach you tender things
of my love till you forget my wrath.
ll be angry when I see good need,
l will grow gentle after, — fear not that;
u shall get no wrong of my wrong-doing.
I take leave.
Queen. Take what you will; take all.
u have taken half my heart away with words:
e all I have, and take no leave; I have
leave to give: yea, shortly shall lack leave,
ink, to live; but I crave none of you;
ould have none: yet for the love I have,
get ever a mean to show it you,
ay God put you some day in my hand
t you may take that too.

Darnley. Well, as he please:
God keep you in such love; and so farewell. [*Exit.*
Queen. So fare I as your lover, but not well. —
Ah, sweet, if God be ever good to me
To put you in my hand! I am come to shame;
Let me think now, and let my wits not go;
God, for dear mercy, let me not forget
Why I should be so angry: the dull blood
Beats at my face, and blinds me; I am chafed to death,
And I am shamed; I shall go mad and die.
Truly I think I did kneel down, did pray,
Yea, weep (who knows?) it may be — all for that.
Yea, if I wept not, this was blood brake forth
And burnt mine eyelids; I will have blood back,
And wash them cool in the hottest of his heart,
Or I will slay myself: I cannot tell.
I have given gold for brass, and lo, the pay
Cleaves to my fingers; there's no way to mend, —
Not while life stays: would God that it were gone!
The fool will feed upon my fame, and laugh;
Till one seal up his tongue and lips with blood,
He carries half my honor and good name
Between his teeth. Lord God, mine head will fail!
When have I done thus since I was alive?
And these ill times will deal but ill with me —
My old love slain, and never a new to help,
And my wits gone, and my blithe use of life,
And all the grace was with me. Love — perchance
If I save love I shall well save myself.

I could find heart to bid him take such fellows,
And kill them to my hand. I was the fool
To sue to these, and shame myself: God knows
I was a queen born, I will hold their heads
Here in my hands for this. Which of you waits?

Enter MARY BEATON *and* MARY CARMICHAEL.

No maiden of them? — what, no more than this?

Mary Carmichael. Madam, the lady Seyton is gone forth;
She is ill at heart with watching.

Queen. Ay, at heart —
All girls must have such tender sides to the heart
They break for one night's watching, ache to death
For an hour's pity, for a half-hour's love —
Wear out before the watches, die by dawn,
And ride at noon to burial. God's my pity!
Where's Hamilton? doth she ail too? at heart,
I warrant her at heart.

Mary Beaton. I know not, madam.

Queen. What! sick or dead? I am well holpen of you:
Come hither to me. What pale blood you have!
Is it for fear you turn such cheeks to me?
Why, if I were so loving, by my hand,
I would have set my head upon the chance,
And loosed him though I died. What will you do?
Have you no way?

Mary Beaton. None but your mercy.

Queen. Ay?
Why, then the thing is piteous. Think, for God's sake —
Is there no loving way to fetch him forth?
Nay, what a white thin-blooded thing is love,
To help no more than this doth! Were I in love,
I would unbar the ways to-night, and then
Laugh death to death to-morrow, mock him dead;
I think you love well with one half your heart,
And let fear keep the other. Hark you now:
You said there was some friend durst break my bars —
Some Scotch name — faith, as if I wist of it!
Ye have such heavy wits to help one with —
Some man that had some mean to save him by —
Tush, I must be at pains for you!

Mary Beaton. Nay, madam,
It were no boot; he will not be let forth.

Queen. I say, the name. Oh, Robert Erskine — yea,
A fellow of some heart: what saith he?

Mary Beaton. Madam,
The thing was sound all through, yea, all went well,
But for all prayers that we could make to him
He would not fly: we cannot get him forth.

Queen. Great God! that men should have such wits as this!
I have a mind to let him die for that;
And yet I wot not. Said he, he loathed his life?

Mary Beaton. He says your grace given would scathe yourself,
And little grace for such a grace as that
Be with the little of the life he kept
To cast off some time more unworthily.

Queen. God help me! what should wise folk do with him?
These men be weaker-witted than mere fools
When they fall mad once; yet by Mary's soul
I am sorrier for him than for men right wise.
God wot a fool that were more wise than he

uld love me something worse than Chastelard,
and his own soul better. Do you think
ere's no such other sort of fool alive)
t he may live?
Iary Beaton. Yea, by God's mercy, madam,
your great praise and honor from all men
ou should keep him living.
ueen. By God's light,
ave good will to do it. Are you sure,
I would pack him with a pardon hence,
would speak well of me — not hint and halt,
ile and look back, sigh and say love runs out,
times have been — with some loose laugh cut short,
off at lip — eh?
Iary Beaton. No, by heaven he would not!
ueen. You know how quickly one may be belied —
th, you should know it; I never thought the worst;
may touch love, and come with clean hands off —
you should know it. What! he will not fly —
though I wink myself asleep, turn blind —
ich that I will I say not?
Iary Beaton. Nay, not he;
had good hope to bring him well aboard,
him slip safe down by the firths to sea,
under Leith by night-setting, and thence
e ship for France, and serve there out of sight
he new wars.
ueen. Ay, in the new French wars —
wist thereof too, madam, with good leave —
oodly bait to catch mine honor with
let me wake up with my name bit through.

I had been much bounden to you twain, methinks,
But for my knight's sake and his love's; by God,
He shall not die in God's despite nor mine.
Call in our chief lords; bid one see to it, —
Ay, and make haste.

[*Exeunt* MARY BEATON *and* MARY CARMICHAEL.

Now shall I try their teeth:
I have done with fear; now nothing but pure love
And power and pity shall have part in me;
I will not throw them such a spirit in flesh
To make their prey on. Though he be mad indeed,
It is the goodliest madness ever smote
Upon man's heart. A kingly knight — in faith,
Meseems my face can yet make faith in men,
And break their brains with beauty: for a word,
An eyelid's twitch, an eye's turn, tie them fast
And make their souls cleave to me. God be thanked,
This air has not yet curdled all the blood
That went to make me fair. An hour agone,
I thought I had been forgotten of men's love
More than dead women's faces are forgot
Of after lovers. All men are not of earth:
For all the frost of fools and this cold land,
There be some yet catch fever of my face
And burning for mine eyes' sake. I did think
My time was gone when men would dance to death
As to a music, and lie laughing down
In the grave and take their funerals for their feasts,

To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet,
Though I lack power on men that lack men's blood.
Yea, and God wot I will be merciful;
For all the foolish hardness round my heart
That tender women miss of to their praise,
They shall not say but I had grace to give
Even for love's sake. Why, let them take their way:
What ails it them though I be soft or hard?
Soft hearts would weep and weep, and let men die
For very mercy and sweet-heartedness;
I that weep little for my pity's sake,
I have the grace to save men. Let fame go —
I care not much what shall become of fame,
So I save love, and do mine own soul right;
I'll have my mercy help me to revenge
On all the crew of them. How will he look,
Having my pardon! I shall have sweet thanks
And love of good men for my mercy's love, —
Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,
With one good deed.

Enter the MARIES.

Mary Beaton. Madam, the lords are here.

Queen. Stand you about me, I will speak to them.
I would the whole world stood up in my face,
And heard what I shall say. Bid them come in.

Enter MURRAY, RANDOLPH, MORTON, LINDSAY, *and other Lords.*

Hear you, fair lords, I have a word to you;
There is one thing I would fain understand, —
If I be queen, or no; for by my life
Methinks I am growing unqueenly. No man speak?
Pray you take note, sweet lord ambassador,
I am no queen: I never was born queen;
Alack, that one should fool us in this wise!
Take up my crown, sir, I will none of it
Till it hath bells on as a fool's cap hath.
Nay, who will have it? no man take it up?
Was there none worthy to be shamed but I?
Here are enow good faces, good to crown;
Will you be king, fair brother? or you, my lord?
Give me a spinner's curch, a wisp of reed,
Any mean thing; but, God's love, no more gold,
And no more shame: let boys throw dice for it,
Or cast it to the grooms for tennis-play,
For I will none.

Murray. What would your highness have?

Queen. Yea, yea, I said I was no majesty;
I shall be shortly fallen out of grace.
What would I have? I would have leave to live;
Perchance I shall not shortly: nay, for me
That have no leave to respite other lives
To keep mine own life were small praise enow.

Murray. Your majesty hath power to respite men,
As we well wot; no man saith otherwise.

Queen. What! is this true? 'tis a thing wonderful —
So great I cannot be well sure of it.
Strange that a queen should find such grace as this
At such lords' hands as ye be, — such great lords:
I pray you let me get assured again,
Lest I take jest for truth, and shame myself,
And make you mirth: to make you mirth of me,
God wot it were small pains to you, my lords,

much less honor. I may send re-
prieve —
h your sweet leaves I may?
Murray. Assuredly.
Queen. Lo, now, what grace is this I
have of you!
d a will to respite Chastelard,
l would not do it for very fear of
you:
k you, I wist not ye were merciful.
Morton. Madam —
Queen. My lord, you have a word to
me?
h it displease you such a man should
live?
Morton. 'Twere a mad mercy in your
majesty
lay no hand upon his second fault
l let him thrice offend you.
Queen. Ay, my lord?
Morton. It were well done to muffle
lewd men's mouths
casting of his head into their laps:
ere much best.
Queen. Yea, truly were it so?
if I will not, yet I will not, sir,
all the mouths in Scotland. Now,
by heaven,
I am pleased he shall not die, but
live,
shall ye be. There is no man shall
die,
ept it please me; and no man shall
say,
ept it please me, if I do ill or well.
ich of you now will set his will to
mine?
you, nor you I think, nor none of
you,
no man living that loves living well.
one stand forth and smite me with
his hand,
ng my crown off and cast it under-
foot,
l he shall get my respite back of me,
no man else: he shall bid live or
die,
no man else; and he shall be my
lord,
no man else. What! will not one
be king?
l not one here lay hold upon my
state?
I am queen of you for all things come
and gone.
Nay, my chief lady, and no meaner
one,
The chiefest of my maidens, shall bear
this,
And give it to my prisoner for a grace.
Who shall deny me? who shall do me
wrong?
Bear greeting to the lord of Chastelard,
And this withal for respite of his life,
For by my head he shall die no such
way:
Nay, sweet, no words, but hence and
back again.
[*Exit* MARY BEATON.
Farewell, dear lords; ye have shown
grace to me,
And some time I will thank you as I
may;
Till when, think well of me and what is
done.

ACT V. — CHASTELARD.

SCENE I. — *Before Holyrood. A crowd of people; among them Soldiers, Burgesses, a Preacher, etc.*

First Citizen. They are not out yet.
Have you seen the man?
What manner of man?
Second Citizen. Shall he be hanged,
or no?
There was a fellow hanged some three
days gone,
Wept the whole way: think you this
man shall die
In better sort, now?
First Citizen. Eh, these shawm-players
That walk before strange women, and
make songs!
How should they die well?
Third Citizen. Is it sooth men say
Our dame was wont to kiss him on the
face
In lewd folk's sight?
First Citizen. Yea, saith one, all day
long
He used to sit and jangle words in
rhyme
To suit with shakes of faint adulterous
sound

Some French lust in men's ears; she made songs too,
Soft things to feed sin's amorous mouth upon,—
Delicate sounds for dancing at in hell.
Fourth Citizen. Is it priest Black that he shall have by him
When they do come?
Third Citizen. Ah! by God's leave, not so;
If the knave show us his peeled onion's head
And that damned flagging jowl of his—
Second Citizen. Nay, sirs,
Take heed of words; moreover, please it you,
This man hath no pope's part in him.
Third Citizen. I say
That if priest whore's-friend with the lewd thief's cheek
Show his foul blinking face to shame all ours,
It goes back fouler; well, one day hell's fire
Will burn him black indeed.
A Woman. What kind of man?
'Tis yet great pity of him if he be
Goodly enow for this queen's paramour.
A French lord overseas? what doth he here,
With Scotch folk here?
First Citizen. Fair mistress, I think well,
He doth so at some times that I were fain
To do as well.
The Woman. Nay, then he will not die.
First Citizen. Why, see you, if one eat a piece of bread
Baked as it were a certain prophet's way,
Not upon coals, now—you shall apprehend—
If defiled bread be given a man to eat,
Being thrust into his mouth, why he shall eat,
And with good hap shall eat; but if now, say,
One steal this, bread and beastliness and all,
When scarcely for pure hunger flesh and bone
Cleave one to other—why, if he steal to eat,
Be it even the filthiest feeding—though the man
Be famine-flayed of flesh and skin, I say
He shall be hanged.
Third Citizen. Nay, stolen said you, sir?
See, God bade eat abominable bread,
And freely was it eaten—for a sign
This, for a sign—and doubtless as did God,
So may the devil; bid one eat freely and live,
Not for a sign.
Second Citizen. Will you think thus of her?
But wherefore should they get this fellow slain
If he be clear toward her?
Third Citizen. Sir, one must see
The day comes when a woman sheds her sin
As a bird moults; and she being shifted so,
The old mate of her old feather pecks at her
To get the right bird back; then she being stronger
Picks out his eyes—eh?
Second Citizen. Like enough to be;
But if it be— Is not one preaching there
With certain folk about him?
First Citizen. Yea, the same
Who preached a month since from Ezekiel
Concerning these twain,—this our queen that is,
And her that was, and is not now so much
As queen over hell's worm.
Third Citizen. Ay, said he not,
This was Aholah, the first one of these,
Called sisters only for a type—being twain,
Twain Maries, no whit Nazarene? the first
Bred out of Egypt like the water-worm
With sides in wet green places baked with slime
And festered flesh that steams against the sun;

plague among all people, and a type
t as a flake upon a leper's fell.
First Citizen. Yea, said he, and unto
her the men went in,
ıe men of Pharaoh's, beautiful with
red
ıd with red gold, fair foreign-footed
men,
e bountiful fair men, the courteous
men,
ıe delicate men with delicate feet, that
went
rling their small beards Agag-fash-
ion, yea,
ıning their mouths to nibble words
behind
ith pecking at God's skirts — small
broken oaths
etted to shreds between most dainty
lips,
ıd underbreath some praise of Ash-
taroth
ghed laughingly.
Second Citizen. Was he not under
guard
r the good word?
First Citizen. Yea, but now forth
again —
d of the latter said he — there being
two,
e first Aholah, which interpreted —
Third Citizen. But, of this latter?
First Citizen. Well, of her he said
ow she made letters for Chaldæan
folk
d men that came forth of the wilder-
ness
d all her sister's chosen men; yea,
she
pt not her lip from any sin of
hers,
t multiplied in whoredoms toward
all these
at hate God mightily; for these, he
saith,
ese are the fair French people, and
these her kin
ught out of England with her love-
letters
bring them to her kiss of love; and
thus
th a prayer made that God would
break such love
Ended some while; then crying out for
strong wrath
Spake with a great voice after: This is
she,
Yea the lewd woman, yea the same
woman
That gat bruised breasts in Egypt, when
strange men
Swart from great suns, foot-burnt with
angry soils,
And strewn with sand of gaunt Chal-
dæan miles,
Poured all their love upon her: she
shall drink
The Lord's cup of derision that is
filled
With drunkenness and sorrow, great of
sides
And deep to drink in till the dreg drips
out:
Yea, and herself with the twain shards
thereof
Pluck off her breasts; so said he.
Fourth Citizen. See that stir —
Are not they come?
Third Citizen. There wants an hour
of them.
Draw near, and let us hearken; he will
speak
Surely some word of this.
Second Citizen. What saith he now?
The Preacher. The mercy of a harlot
is a sword,
And her mouth sharper than a flame of
fire.

Scene II. — *In Prison.*

Chastelard. So here my time shuts
up; and the last light
Has made the last shade in the world
for me.
The sunbeam that was narrow like a
leaf
Has turned a hand, and the hand
stretched to an arm,
And the arm has reached the dust on
the floor, and made
A maze of motes with paddling fingers.
Well,
I knew not that a man so sure to die
Could care so little; a bride-night's
lustiness

Leaps in my veins as light fire under a wind:
As if I felt a kindling beyond death
Of some new joys far outside of me yet;
Sweet sound, sweet smell and touch of things far out
Sure to come soon. I wonder will death be
Even all it seems now? or the talk of hell
And wretched changes of the worn-out soul
Nailed to decaying flesh, shall that be true?
Or is this like the forethought of deep sleep
Felt by a tired man? Sleep were good enough —
Shall sleep be all? But I shall not forget
For any sleep this love bound upon me —
For any sleep or quiet ways of death.
Ah! in my weary dusty space of sight
Her face will float with heavy scents of hair
And fire of subtle amorous eyes, and lips
More hot than wine, full of sweet wicked words
Babbled against mine own lips, and long hands
Spread out, and pale bright throat and pale bright breasts,
Fit to make all men mad. I do believe
This fire shall never quite burn out to the ash,
And leave no heat and flame upon my dust
For witness where a man's heart was burnt up.
For all Christ's work this Venus is not quelled,
But reddens at the mouth with blood of men,
Sucking between small teeth the sap o' the veins,
Dabbling with death her little tender lips —
A bitter beauty, poisonous-pearlèd mouth.
I am not fit to live but for love's sake,
So I were best die shortly. Ah! fair love,
Fair fearful Venus made of deadly foam,
I shall escape you somehow with my death, —
Your splendid supple body and mouth on fire,
And Paphian breath that bites the lips with heat.
I had best die.

Enter MARY BEATON.

What! is my death's time come,
And you the friend to make death kind to me?
'Tis sweetly done; for I was sick for this.

Mary Beaton. Nay, but see here; nay, for you shall not die:
She has reprieved you; look, her name to that,
A present respite; I was sure of her:
You are quite safe: here, take it in your hands:
I am faint with the end of pain. Read there.

Chastelard. Reprieve?
Wherefore reprieve? Who has done this to me?

Mary Beaton. I never feared but God would have you live,
Or I knew well God must have punished me;
But I feared nothing, had no sort of fear.
What makes you stare upon the seal so hard?
Will you not read now?

Chastelard. A reprieve of life —
Reprieving me from living. Nay, by God,
I count one death a bitter thing enough.

Mary Beaton. See what she writes; your love; for love of you;
Out of her love; a word to save your life:
But I knew this too though you love me not:
She is your love; I knew that: yea, by heaven.

Chastelard. You knew I had to live and be reprieved:
Say I were bent to die now?

Mary Beaton. Do not die,

r her sweet love's sake; not for pity of me,
u would not bear with life for me one hour;
t for hers only.
Chastelard. Nay, I love you well,
vould not hurt you for more lives than one.
t for this fair-faced paper of reprieve,
e'll have no riddling to make death shift sides:
ok, here ends one of us. [*Tearing it.*
For her I love,
e will not anger heaven with slaying me;
r me, I am well quit of loving her;
r you, I pray you be well comforted,
eing in my life no man gat good by me,
d by my death no hurt is any man's.
Mary Beaton. And I that loved you? nay, I loved you; nay,
hy should your like be pitied when they love?
r hard heart is not yet so hard as yours,
r God's hard heart. I care not if you die.
ese bitter madmen are not fit to live.
vill not have you touch me, speak to me,
r take farewell of you. See you die well,
death will play with shame for you, and win,
d laugh you out of life. I am right glad
ever am to see you any more,
r I should come to hate you easily;
vould not have you live. [*Exit.*
Chastelard. She has cause enow.
vould this wretched waiting had an end,
r I wax feebler than I was: God knows
ad a mind once to have saved this flesh,
d made life one with shame. It marvels me
is girl that loves me should desire so much
have me sleep with shame for bedfellow
A whole life's space; she would be glad to die
To escape such life. It may be, too, her love
Is but an amorous quarrel with herself,
Not love of me, but her own wilful soul;
Then she will live, and be more glad of this
Than girls of their own will and their heart's love
Before love mars them: so God go with her!
For mine own love — I wonder will she come
Sad at her mouth a little, with drawn cheeks
And eyelids wrinkled up? or hot and quick
To lean her head on mine and leave her lips
Deep in my neck? For surely she must come;
And I should fare the better to be sure
What she will do. But as it please my sweet;
For some sweet thing she must do if she come,
Seeing how I have to die. Now three years since,
This had not seemed so good an end for me;
But in some wise all things wear round betimes,
And wind up well. Yet doubtless she might take
A will to come my way, and hold my hands,
And kiss me some three kisses, throat, mouth, eyes,
And say some soft three words to soften death:
I do not see how this should break her ease.
Nay, she will come to get her warrant back:
By this no doubt she is sorely penitent,
Her fit of angry mercy well blown out,
And her wits cool again. She must have chafed
A great while through for anger to become
So like pure pity; they must have fretted her

Nigh mad for anger: or it may be mistrust,
She is so false; yea, to my death I think
She will not trust me; alas the hard sweet heart!
As if my lips could hurt her any way
But by too keenly kissing of her own!
Ah! false poor sweet fair lips that keep no faith,
They shall not catch mine false or dangerous;
They must needs kiss me one good time, albeit
They love me not at all. Lo, here she comes,
For the blood leaps and catches at my face;
There go her feet, and tread upon my heart;
Now shall I see what way I am to die.

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. What! is one here? Speak to me, for God's sake:
Where are you lain?

Chastelard. Here, madam, at your hand.

Queen. Sweet lord, what sore pain have I had for you,
And been most patient! — Nay, you are not bound.
If you be gentle to me, take my hand.
Do you not hold me the worst heart in the world?
Nay, you must needs; but say not yet you do.
I am worn so weak, I know not how I live:
Reach me your hand.

Chastelard. Take comfort and good heart;
All will find end; this is some grief to you,
But you shall overlive it. Come, fair love;
Be of fair cheer: I say you have done no wrong.

Queen. I will not be of cheer: I have done a thing
That will turn fire and burn me. Tell me not;
If you will do me comfort, whet your sword.
But if you hate me, tell me of soft things,
For I hate these, and bitterly. Look up;
Am I not mortal to be gazed upon?

Chastelard. Yea, mortal, and not hateful.

Queen. O lost heart!
Give me some mean to die by.

Chastelard. Sweet, enough.
You have made no fault; life is not worth a world,
That you should weep to take it: would mine were,
And I might give you a world-worthier gift
Than one poor head that love has made a spoil;
Take it for jest, and weep not: let me go,
And think I died of chance or malady.
Nay, I die well; one dies not best abed.

Queen. My warrant to reprieve you — that you saw?
That came between your hands?

Chastelard. Yea, not long since.
It seems you have no will to let me die.

Queen. Alas! you know I wrote it with my heart,
Out of pure love; and since you were in bonds,
I have had such grief for love's sake and my heart's, —
Yea, by my life I have, — I could not choose
But give love way a little. Take my hand;
You know it would have pricked my heart's blood out
To write reprieve with.

Chastelard. Sweet, your hands are kind;
Lay them about my neck, upon my face,
And tell me not of writing.

Queen. Nay, by heaven,
I would have given you mine own blood to drink
If that could heal you of your soul-sickness.
Yea, they know that, they curse me for your sake,
Rail at my love — Would God their heads were lopped,

d we twain left together this side
death!
look you, sweet, if this my warrant
hold
ı are but dead and shamed; for you
must die,
d they will slay you shamefully by
force
n in my sight.
hastelard. Faith, I think so they
will.
ueen. Nay, they would slay me too,
cast stones at me,
g me alive; they have eaten poison-
ous words,
y are mad, and have no shame.
hastelard. Ay, like enough.
ueen. Would God my heart were
greater! but God wot
ave no heart to bear with fear, and
die.
, and I cannot help you: or I
know
ould be nobler, bear a better heart:
as this stands — I pray you for good
love,
you hold honor a costlier thing than
life —
hastelard. Well?
ueen. Nay, I would not be denied
for shame;
rief, I pray you give me that again.
hastelard. What, my reprieve?
ueen. Even so; deny me not,
your sake mainly: yea, by God you
know
v fain I were to die in your death's
stead.
your name's sake. This were no
need to swear.
: we be mocked to death with a
reprieve,
l so both die, being shamed. What!
shall I swear?
at, if I kiss you? must I pluck it
out?
do not love me: no, nor honor.
Come,
iow you have it about you: give it
me.
hastelard. I cannot yield you such a
thing again;
as I had it.

Queen. A coward? what shift now?
Do such men make such cravens?
Chastelard. Chide me not:
Pity me that I cannot help my heart.
Queen. Heaven mend mine eyes that
took you for a man!
What, is it sewn into your flesh? take
heed —
Nay, but for shame — what have you
done with it?
Chastelard. Why, there it lies, torn up.
Queen. God help me, sir!
Have you done this?
Chastelard. Yea, sweet; what should
I do?
Did I not know you to the bone, my
sweet?
God speed you well! you have a goodly
lord.
Queen. My love, sweet love, you are
more fair than he,
Yea, fairer many times: I love you
much,
Sir, know you that?
Chastelard. I think I know that well.
Sit here a little till I feel you through
In all my breath and blood for some
sweet while.
O gracious body that mine arms have
had,
And hair my face has felt on it! grave
eyes,
And low thick lids that keep since years
agone
In the blue sweet of each particular
vein
Some special print of me! I am right
glad
That I must never feel a bitterer thing
Than your soft curled-up shoulder and
amorous arms
From this time forth; nothing can hap
to me
Less good than this for all my whole
life through.
I would not have some new pain after
this
Come spoil the savor. Oh, your round
bird's throat,
More soft than sleep or singing; your
calm cheeks,
Turned bright, turned wan with kisses
hard and hot;

The beautiful color of your deep curved hands,
Made of a red rose that had changed to white;
That mouth mine own holds half the sweetness of,
Yea, my heart holds the sweetness of it, whence
My life began in me,—mine that ends here
Because you have no mercy; nay, you know
You never could have mercy. My fair love,
Kiss me again, God loves you not the less;
Why should one woman have all goodly things?
You have all beauty; let mean women's lips
Be pitiful, and speak truth: they will not be
Such perfect things as yours. Be not ashamed
That hands not made like these that snare men's souls
Should do men good, give alms, relieve men's pain:
You have the better, being more fair than they;
They are half foul, being rather good than fair;
You are quite fair: to be quite fair is best.
Why, two nights hence I dreamed that I could see
In through your bosom, under the left flower,
And there was a round hollow, and at heart
A little red snake sitting, without spot,
That bit—like this, and sucked up sweet—like this,
And curled its lithe light body right and left,
And quivered like a woman in act to love.
Then there was some low fluttered talk i' the lips,
Faint sound of soft fierce words caressing them—
Like a fair woman's when her love gets way.
Ah! your old kiss—I know the ways of it:
Let the lips cling a little. Take them off,
And speak some word, or I go mad with love.

Queen. Will you not have my chaplain come to you?

Chastelard. Some better thing of yours,—some handkerchief,
Some fringe of scarf to make confession to.
You had some book about you that fell out—

Queen. A little written book of Ronsard's rhymes,
His gift, I wear in there for love of him—
See, here between our feet.

Chastelard. Ay, my old lord's,—
The sweet chief poet, my dear friend long since?
Give me the book. Lo you, this verse of his:

With coming lilies in late April came
Her body, fashioned whiter for their shame;
And roses, touched with blood since Adon bled,
From her fair color filled their lips with red:

A goodly praise: I could not praise you so.
I read that while your marriage-feast went on.
Leave me this book, I pray you: I would read
The hymn of death here over ere I die;
I shall know soon how much he knew of death
When that was written. One thing I know now:
I shall not die with half a heart at least,
Nor shift my face, nor weep my fault alive;
Nor swear, if I might live, and do new deeds,
I would do better. Let me keep the book.

Queen. Yea, keep it: as would God you had kept your life

of mine eyes and hands! I am
wrung to the heart:
s hour feels dry and bitter in my
mouth,
f its sorrow were my body's food
e than my soul's. There are bad
thoughts in me,—
t bitter fancies biting me like birds
t tear each other. Suppose you
need not die?
hastelard. You know I cannot live
for two hours more.
fate was made thus ere our days
were made:
l you fight fortune for so small a
grief?
for one thing I were full fain of
death.
ueen. What thing is that?
hastelard. None need to name the
thing.
y, what can death do with me fit to
fear?
if I sleep I shall not weep awake;
if their saying be true of things to
come,
ugh hell be sharp, in the worst ache
of it
all be eased, so God will give me
back
etimes one golden gracious sight
of you—
aureole woven flower-like through
your hair,
in your lips the little laugh as red
hen it came upon a kiss and ceased,
ching my mouth.
ueen. As I do now, this way,
n my heart after: would I could
shed tears!
s should not fail when the heart
shudders so.
your bad thought?
astelard. Well, such a thought as
this:
ay be, long time after I am dead,
all you are, you may see bitter
days;
may forget you, or be wroth with
you:
n shall you lack a little help of me,
I shall feel your sorrow touching
you,
A happy sorrow, though I may not
touch,—
I that would fain be turned to flesh
again,
Fain get back life to give up life for
you,
To shed my blood for help, that long
ago
You shed and were not holpen; and
your heart
Will ache for help and comfort, yea for
love,
And find less love than mine—for I do
think
You never will be loved thus in your
life.
Queen. It may be man will never love
me more;
For I am sure I shall not love man
twice.
Chastelard. I know not: men must
love you in life's spite;
For you will always kill them; man by
man
Your lips will bite them dead; yea,
though you would,
You shall not spare one; all will die of
you;
I cannot tell what love shall do with
these,
But I for all my love shall have no might
To help you more, mine arms and hands
no power
To fasten on you more. This cleaves
my heart,
That they shall never touch your body
more.
But for your grief—you will not have
to grieve;
For being in such poor eyes so beauti-
ful
It must needs be as God is more than I
So much more love he hath of you than
mine;
Yea, God shall not be bitter with my
love,
Seeing she is so sweet.
Queen. Ah! my sweet fool,
Think you, when God will ruin me for
sin,
My face of color shall prevail so much
With him, so soften the toothed iron's
edge

To save my throat a scar? nay, I am sure
I shall die somehow sadly.
Chastelard. This is pure grief;
The shadow of your pity for my death,
Mere foolishness of pity: all sweet moods
Throw out such little shadows of themselves,
Leave such light fears behind. You, die like me?
Stretch your throat out that I may kiss all round
Where mine shall be cut through: suppose my mouth
The axe-edge to bite so sweet a throat in twain
With bitter iron, should not it turn soft
As lip is soft to lip?
Queen. I am quite sure
I shall die sadly some day, Chastelard;
I am quite certain.
Chastelard. Do not think such things;
Lest all my next world's memories of you be
As heavy as this thought.
Queen. I will not grieve you;
Forgive me that my thoughts were sick with grief.
What can I do to give you ease at heart?
Shall I kiss now? I pray you, have no fear
But that I love you.
Chastelard. Turn your face to me;
I do not grudge your face this death of mine;
It is too fair — by God, you are too fair.
What noise is that?
Queen. Can the hour be through so soon?
I bade them give me but a little hour.
Ah! I do love you! such brief space for love!
I am yours all through, do all your will with me;
What if we lay and let them take us fast,
Lips grasping lips? I dare do any thing.
Chastelard. Show better cheer: let no man see you mazed;
Make haste and kiss me; cover up your throat,
Lest one see tumbled lace, and prate of it.
Enter the Guard: MURRAY, DARNLEY, MARY HAMILTON, MARY BEATON, *and others with them,*
Darnley. Sirs, do your charge; let him not have much time.
Mary Hamilton. Peace, lest you chafe the queen: look, her brows bend.
Chastelard. Lords, and all you come hither for my sake,
If while my life was with me like a friend
That I must now forget the friendship of,
I have done a wrong to any man of you,
As it may be by fault of mine I have;
Of such an one I crave for courtesy
He will now cast it from his mind and heed
Like a dead thing; considering my dead fault
Worth no remembrance further than my death.
This for his gentle honor and good-will
I do beseech him, doubting not to find
Such kindliness if he be nobly made
And of his birth a courteous race of man.
You, my lord James, if you have aught toward me —
Or you, Lord Darnley — I dare fear no jot,
Whate'er this be wherein you were aggrieved,
But you will pardon all for gentleness.
Darnley. For my part — yea, well, if the thing stand thus,
As you must die — one would not bear folk hard —
And if the rest shall hold it honorable,
Why, I do pardon you.
Murray. Sir, in all things
We find no cause to speak of you but well:
For all I see, save this your deadly fault,
I hold you for a noble perfect man.
Chastelard. I thank you, fair lord, for your nobleness.
You likewise, for the courtesy you have

re you thanks, sir; and to all these lords
t have not heart to load me at my death.
, I beseech of the best queen of men,
royallest fair lady in the world,
pardon me my grievous mortal sin
e in such great offence of her: for, sirs,
ver since I came between her eyes
hath beheld me other than I am,
hown her honor other than it is,
save in royal faultless courtesies,
d me with favor; if by speech or face,
alutation or by tender eyes,
hath made a way for my desire to live,
n ear to me or boldness to my breath;
ay God cast me forth before day cease,
to the heaviest place there is in hell.
if she be not stainless toward all men,
y this axe that I shall die upon
cut me off body and soul from heaven.
for my soul's sake I dare pray to you:
ive me, madam.
een. Yea, I do, fair sir:
all my heart, in all I pardon you.
astelard. God thank you for great mercies. — Lords, set hence;
right loath to hold your patience here;
st not hold much longer any man's.
g me my way, and bid me fare well forth.
they pass out, the QUEEN *stays* MARY BEATON.
een. Hark hither, sweet. Get back to Holyrood,
take Carmichael with you: go both up
ome chief window whence the squares lie clear, —
not to know what I shall do: mark that, —
And watch how things fare under. Have good cheer;
You do not think now I can let him die?
Nay, this were shameful madness if you did,
And I should hate you.
Mary Beaton. Pray you love me, madam,
And swear you love me, and will let me live,
That I may die the quicker.
Queen. Nay, sweet, see,
Nay, you shall see, this must not seem devised;
I will take any man with me, and go;
Yea, for pure hate of them that hate him: yea,
Lay hold upon the headsman, and bid strike
Here on my neck; if they will have him die,
Why, I will die too: queens have died this way
For less things than his love is. Nay, I know
They want no blood; I will bring swords to boot
For dear love's rescue though half earth were slain;
What should men do with blood? Stand fast at watch;
For I will be his ransom if I die.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The Upper Chamber in Holyrood.*

MARY BEATON *seated:* MARY CARMICHAEL *at a window.*

Mary Beaton. Do you see nothing?
Mary Carmichael. Nay, but swarms of men
And talking women gathered in small space,
Flapping their gowns and gaping with fools' eyes;
And a thin ring round one that seems to speak,
Holding his hands out eagerly: no more.
Mary Beaton. Why, I hear more: I hear men shout *The queen!*

Mary Carmichael. Nay, no cries yet.
Mary Beaton. Ah! they will cry out soon
When she comes forth; they should cry out on her:
I hear their crying in my heart. Nay, sweet,
Do not you hate her? All men, if God please,
Shall hate her one day; yea, one day, no doubt,
I shall worse hate her.
Mary Carmichael. Pray you, be at peace;
You hurt yourself: she will be merciful;
What! could you see a true man slain for you?
I think I could not; it is not like our hearts
To have such hard sides to them.
Mary Beaton. Oh, not you,
And I could nowise: there's some blood in her
That does not run to mercy as ours doth;
That fair face and the cursed heart in her
Made keener than a knife for manslaying
Can bear strange things.
Mary Carmichael. Peace, for the people come.
Ah! Murray, hooded over half his face
With plucked-down hat, few folk about him, eyes
Like a man angered; Darnley after him,
Holding our Hamilton above her wrist,
His mouth put near her hair to whisper with —
And she laughs softly, looking at his feet.
Mary Beaton. She will not live long; God hath given her
Few days and evil, full of hate and love,
I see well now.
Mary Carmichael. Hark, there's their cry — *The queen!*
Fair life and long, and good days to the queen!
Mary Beaton. Yea, but God knows. I feel such patience here
As I were sure in a brief while to die.
Mary Carmichael. She bends and laughs a little, graciously,
And turns half, talking to I know not whom —
A big man with great shoulders; ah! the face,
You get his face now, — wide and dusk-ish, yea,
The youth burnt out of it. A goodly man,
Thewed mightily and sunburnt to the bone;
Doubtless he was away in banishment,
Or kept some march far off.
Mary Beaton. Still you see nothing?
Mary Carmichael. Yea, now they bring him forth with a great noise,
The folk all shouting, and men thrust about
Each way from him.
Mary Beaton. Ah! Lord God, bear with me,
Help me to bear a little with my love
For thine own love, or give me some quick death.
Do not come down; I shall get strength again,
Only my breath fails. Looks he sad or blithe?
Not sad I doubt yet.
Mary Carmichael. Nay, not sad a whit,
But like a man who losing gold or lands
Should lose a heavy sorrow; his face set,
The eyes not curious to the right or left,
And reading in a book, his hands unbound,
With short fleet smiles. The whole place catches breath,
Looking at him; she seems at point to speak:
Now she lies back, and laughs, with her brows drawn
And her lips drawn too. Now they read his crime.
I see the laughter tightening her chin:
Why do you bend your body, and draw breath?
They will not slay him in her sight; I am sure
She will not have him slain.

Mary Beaton. Forth, and fear not:
as just praying to myself — one word,
prayer I have to say for her to God
he will mind it.
Mary Carmichael. Now he looks her
side;
mething he says, if one could hear
thus far:
e leans out, lengthening her throat
to hear,
d her eyes shining.
Mary Beaton. Ah! I had no hope;
a, thou God knowest that I had no
hope.
it end quickly.
Mary Carmichael. Now his eyes are
wide,
d his smile great; and like another
smile
e blood fills all his face. Her cheek
and neck
ork fast and hard; she must have
pardoned him,
looks so merrily. Now he comes
forth
t of that ring of people, and kneels
down;
! how the helve and edge of the
great axe
rn in the sunlight as the man shifts
hands!
nust be for a show: because she sits
d hardly moves her head this way;
I see
r chin and lifted lips. Now she
stands up,
s out her hand, and they fall mutter-
ing;
!
Mary Beaton. It is done now?
Mary Carmichael. For God's love,
stay there!
not look out. Nay, he is dead by
this;
gather up yourself from off the floor.
ll she die too? I shut mine eyes,
and heard —
eet, do not beat your face upon the
ground.
y, he is dead and slain.
Mary Beaton. What! slain indeed?
new he would be slain. Ay, through
the neck:
I knew one must be smitten through the
neck,
To die so quick: if one were stabbed
to the heart,
He would die slower.
Mary Carmichael. Will you behold
him dead?
Mary Beaton. Yea: must a dead man
not be looked upon
That living one was fain of? give me
way.
Lo you, what sort of hair this fellow
had;
The doomsman gathers it into his hand
To grasp the head by for all men to see:
I never did that.
Mary Carmichael. For God's love, let
me go!
Mary Beaton. I think sometimes she
must have held it so,
Holding his head back, see you, by the
hair,
To kiss his face, still lying in his arms.
Ay, go and weep: it must be pitiful
If one could see it. What is this they
say?
So perish the queen's traitors! Yea,
but so
Perish the queen! — God, do thus much
to her
For his sake only: yea, for pity's sake
Do thus much with her.
Mary Carmichael. Prithee, come in
with me:
Nay, come at once.
Mary Beaton. If I should meet with
her,
And spit upon her at her coming in —
But if I live then shall I see one day
When God will smite her lying harlot's
mouth, —
Surely I shall. Come, I will go with
you;
We will sit down together face to face
Now, and keep silence; for this life is
hard,
And the end of it is quietness at last.
Come, let us go: here is no word to
say.
An usher. Make way there for the
lord of Bothwell; room, —
Place for my lord of Bothwell next the
queen.

BOTHWELL: A TRAGEDY.

πολλὰ μὲν γὰ τρέφει
δεινα δειμάτων ἄχη,
πόντιαί τ' ἀγκάλαι κνωδάλων
ἀνταίων βροτοῖσι
πλάθουσι, βλαστοῦσι καὶ πεδαίχμιοι
λαμπάδες πεδάοροι,
πτανά τε καὶ πεδοβάμονα, κἀνεμοέντων
αἰγίδων φράσαι κότον.

ἀλλ' ὑπέρτολμον ἀν-
δρὸς φρόνημα τίς λέγοι,
καὶ γυναικῶν φρεσὶν τλημόνων;
καὶ παντόλμους
ἔρωτας ἄταισι συννόμους βροτῶν,
ξυζύγους θ' ὁμαυλίας;
θηλυκρατὴς ἀπέρωτος ἔρως παρανικᾷ
κνωδάλων τε καὶ βροτῶν.

AESCH. *Cho.* 585–601.

À VICTOR HUGO.

Comme un fleuve qui donne à l'océan son âme,
J'apporte au lieu sacré d'où le vers tonne et luit
Mon drame épique et plein de tumulte et de flamme,
Où vibre un siècle éteint, où flotte un jour qui fuit.

Un peuple qui rugit sous les pieds d'une femme
Passe, et son souffle emplit d'aube et d'ombre et de bruit
Un ciel âpre et guerrier qui luit comme une lame
Sur l'avenir debout, sur le passé détruit.

Au fond des cieux hagards, par l'orage battue,
Une figure d'ombre et d'étoiles vêtue
Pleure et menace et brille en s'évanouissant;

Éclair d'amour qui blesse et de haine qui tue,
Fleur éclose au sommet du siècle éblouissant,
Rose à tige épineuse et que rougit le sang.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mary Stuart.
Mary Beaton.
Mary Seyton.
Mary Carmichael.
Jane Gordon, *Countess of Bothwell.*
Janet Stuart, *Countess of Argyle.*
Margaret Lady Douglas *of Lochleven.*
Lady Reres.
Henry Lord Darnley, *King Consort.*
James Hepburn, *Earl of Bothwell.*
James Stuart, *Earl of Murray.*
James Douglas, *Earl of Morton.*
William Maitland *of Lethington, Secretary of State.*
John Knox.
David Rizzio.
The Earls of Huntley, Argyle, Caithness, Rothes, Cassilis, Athol, *and* Mar.
Lords Herries, Lindsay, Ruthven, Fleming, Seyton, Boyd, Ochiltree, Hume, Arbroath, *and* Maxwell.
The younger Ruthven.
The Master of Ochiltree, *son to Lord Ochiltree.*
The Master of Maxwell, *son to Lord Herries.*
Sir James Melville.
Sir Robert Melville.
Sir George Douglas, *uncle to Darnley.*
Sir William Douglas *of Lochleven.*
George Douglas, *his brother.*
Sir William Kirkaldy *of Grange.*
Lord Robert Stuart, *Abbot of St. Cross.*
Du Croc, *Ambassador from France.*
Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, *Ambassador from England.*
John Hamilton, *Archbishop of St. Andrew's.*
John Leslie, *Bishop of Ross.*
Arthur Erskine, *Captain of the Guard.*
Anthony Standen *and* Stuart of Traquair, *Equerries.*

ERSKINE *of Dun.*
REW KER *of Fauldonside.*
RY DRUMMOND *of Ricarton.*
IBALD BEATON.
HEPBURN *of Bolton*, ORMISTON, HAY *of*
Talla, Conspirators with Bothwell.
WFORD, NELSON, TAYLOR, *servants to*
Darnley.

NICHOLAS HUBERT, *surnamed* PARIS, *servant to Bothwell.*
THE PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, *steward to the Earl of Lennox.*
Page and Girl attending on Lady Lochleven.
Burgesses, Citizens, Soldiers, Attendants, etc.

TIME, MARCH 9, 1566, TO MAY 16, 1568.

ACT I.—DAVID RIZZIO.

SCENE I.—HOLYROOD.

er DARNLEY *and* MARY CARMICHAEL.

arnley. But you will not believe me
though you hear;
have no faith: you steer by sight,
and see
s fellow gilt and garnished with her
grace
covered by the queen where lords
stand bare,
jet before them lordlier; and the
sight
es firm your faith that in his hand
and eye
land is but a harp to play upon,
ose strings may turn to serpents or
to swords,
naim his hand or charm his eye to
death.
have no faith to see this, or to
read
sentence that ensuing shall write
me king,
worth men's fears or faiths: lo!
now you laugh,
hough my hope were braggart, and
myself
ool and mouthpiece of its foolish
vaunt:
have no faith.
ary Carmichael. I have no wit nor
will
choose between St. David for my
lord
sweet St. Henry.
rnley. Nay, King David now,
David psalmist; but for all his
song
I doubt he hath lost the old trick of
touch he had
Once in the sword-play.
Mary Carmichael. See you play not
Saul,
Who are something of his stature in
our eyes,
Much of his mighty presence; be it not
said
He hath snipt your skirts already.
Darnley. Who said that?
Who speaks of me so, lies to the blood
and bone,
To the heart and soul lies. I am no
king mayhap,—
I do not say yet I shall die no
king:
God knows that, and is wise,—but man
I am,
Look else, who love you—
Mary Carmichael. Sir, be king for
me,
It shall content my will to you-ward,
seeing
I take you to be royal, and myself
Honest.
Darnley. Why honest? what a gibe
is this?
What make you of me?
Mary Carmichael. Yea, what should
I make?
'Tis time I were on service.
Darnley. Oh, the queen's?
She gets good service, excellent service
done,
And worthy servants hath she,—a lib-
eral queen.
Well, if you will.
[*Exit* MARY CARMICHAEL.
I would the month were out.
If earth were easier by just one less
knave,

I might sleep well and laugh and walk at ease,
With none to mate me.
Enter MORTON.
Ah! my good lord and friend,
I had somewhat I would say — but let words be.
The man you know of, I would you had made him safe;
I would have told you this much.
Morton. Sir, the earl
Murray being with us in the main thing here,
Though he keep hand from the red handiwork,
Shall enough help us.
Darnley. Let him know it not, then:
Let him stand by: he must not know it. Why, well,
It is the more our honor: yet would God
He, being not with us, were not anywhere,
But dead, sir, dead! I say, who hath eyes to see
May see him dangerous to us, and manifest.
Ye have no eyes who see not: for my part,
I noted him at once. Sir, by this light,
When I first saw him — and I have eyes to see —
I knew what manner of meaning in his face
Lay privy and folded up and sealed and signed.
I would you lords had sight and heart like mine:
He should not long live dangerous; yet, God wot,
For my poor personal peril I would match
This body against his better.
Morton. There's no need
Of iron words and matches here of men,
Save this we meet upon; which being played out
Leaves our hands full and henceforth peaceable.
For the earl, he makes no part of men's designs,
Nor would I have you keen to strive with him
Who lies yet still, and is well liked of men
That are well-willers to this common state
And the open peace of the people. Let him be;
Keep your heart here.
Darnley. Here is it fixed and set
With roots of iron. 'Tis more honor to us,
Being so more perilous, to have no help
Of popular hands and common friendliness,
But our hearts helpful only. I am sure of her,
That she suspects not, — I do surely think:
But yet she is subtle and secret-souled and wise,
Wise woman-fashion; look you, be not caught
Through too much trust in what of her is weak, —
In her light mind and mutability;
For subtlety lies close in her light wit,
And wisdom wantons in her wantonness:
I know her, I know her; I have seen her ere now, and am
Not all to learn in women.
Morton. I believe
Your grace hath grace with women as with men,
And skill of sense alike in those and these,
I doubt not; which is well and profitable.
For this, how shall she know it, except you slip
And let her wring the truth out from your hand,
Or kiss the truth out, hanging mouth on mouth?
But if no pressure press from hand or lip
The unripe truth, the fruit so soon so red,
What can she to us, though doubting, help or harm, —
How, if she know not surely?
Darnley. So I say.

we that do it, we do it for all men's good,
the main people's love, thankworthily —
this is matter of law we take in hand,
not, lawful? for the man is judged,
med dead and damned by sentence, in good deed,
ugh not by scruple and show of trial and test,
learer cause and purer policy —
cannot stand toward any accountable,
or a slaughter, a treasonable shame,
mark us red in the world's eyes? no man
say our fame is blotted with his blood,
man, albeit he hate us, bring in doubt, —
nan or man, — our right, our absolute law,
ng us leave — nay, bidding us do so?
nat we stand after the deed as now,
o more danger or fear?

orton. In less fear, you,
much more honor; now it might please you fear,
g overborne of woman and fast bound
feminine shame and weakness; the man's strength,
sinew and nerve and spirit of royalty,
, and all power to use her power on you
, and all honor and pleasure of high place
should make sweet your lips and bright your brows
, and the mockery of mismarried men
s.

rnley. Nay, by God I said so; why, I knew it:
d you thus aforetime, did I not?

orton. Truly and wisely; if this content you thus,
even our king.

rnley. Methinks he should be king,
And I, God wot, content. Here came a man
Some few days back, a goodly, a gentleman,
An honorable, that for king knave's behoof
Was stript out of the better of all his lands
As I of what was best part of my wife,
My place, and honor that grows up with hers —
For of her love small fruit was left to strip,
Few leaves for winter weather — but of these,
These good things, am I stript as bare as shame,
Even beggared as was this man. By God's light,
It seems this is but justice, doth it not,
And I so gentle and temperate — as, by God,
I was not nor I will not.

Morton. There's more need
That you seem resolutely temperate then,
And temperately be resolute, I say,
Till the hour to cast off temperance and put on
Plain passion for the habit of your heart,
Which now it wears in darkness, and by day
The cloak and hood of temperance. But these fits
And gusts and starts of will and will not, these
Blow you this side and that side till men see
Too much, and trust too little.

Darnley. O sir, you are wise,
You are honorable, and a counsellor, and my friend,
And I too light, too light — yet by this light
I think I am worth more than your counsel is
If I be worth this work here to be done —
I think I am so much.

Morton. It may well be, sir,
And you much wiser; yet forbear your wrath
If you would have it ready to your hand.

Darnley. I will forbear nothing — nor nothing bear —
Nor live by no man's bidding. This year through
I have even been surfeited with wise men's breath
And winds of wordy weather round mine ears, —
Do this, spare that, walk thus, look otherwise,
Hold your head kingly, or wisely bow your neck:
A man might come to doubt himself no man,
Being so long childlike handled. Now, look you,
Look she, look God to it if I be not man!
Now is my way swept, and my foot shod now,
My wallet full now for the travelling day
That I fare forth and forward, arrow straight,
Girt for the goal, red battle-ripe at need —
As need there is — you are sure — and utter need?
Morton. Is my lord not sure?
Darnley. Ay, as sure as you, —
Surer, maybe: the need is more of mine, —
This grazes your bare hand that grates my heart:
Your queen it is wrongs you, and me my wife.
Morton. You see that sure, too? sharp sight, have you not?
Darnley. I saw it, I first — I knew her — who knew her but I,
That swore, — at least, I swore to mine own soul,
Would not for shame's sake swear out wide to the world,
But in myself swore with my heart to hear, —
There was more in it, in all their commerce, more
Than the mere music: he is warped, worn through,
Bow-bent, uncomely in wholesome eyes that see
Straight, seeing him crooked; but she seeing awry
Sees the man straight enough for paramour.
This I saw, this I swore too — silently,
Not loud but sure, till time should be to speak
Sword's language, no fool's jargon like his tongue,
But plain broad steel speech and intelligible,
Though not to the ear, Italian's be it or Scot's,
But to the very life intelligible,
To the loosed soul, to the shed blood — for blood
There must be — one must slay him — you are sure — as I am?
For I was sure of it always: while you said,
All you, 'twas council-stuff, state-handicraft,
Cunning of card-play between here and there,
I knew 'twas this and more, sir; I kept sight,
Kept heed of her, what thing she was, what wife,
What manner of stateswoman and governess —
More than all you saw — did you see it or I?
Morton. You saw first surely, and some one spoke first out —
You had eyes, he tongue — and both bear witness now
If this must be or not be.
Darnley. Death, is that?
I must kill — bid you kill him?
Morton. Nowise, sir;
As little need of one as the other is here;
As little of either as no need at all.
Darnley. You doubt or hand or tongue, then, sir, of mine?
I would not strike, if need were, or bid strike?
Morton. Neither we doubt, nor neither do we need —
Having you with us.
Darnley. 'Twas but so you meant?
I had else been angry — nay, half wroth I was —
Not as I took it — I had else been wroth indeed.

orton. That had been grievous to
me and perilous,
time of all times.
arnley. Ay, you need me, ay;
n somewhat now then, somewhat
more than wont,
thus long have been nothing —
but will be?
l, so, I am with you. Shall he die
— how soon?
ay I had said, but haply not to-
day —
e might fall somewhat, something
slip awry,
uch swift work, ha? Then, what
day? Perchance
re better he died abed — or were
there charms,
ls — if himself though be not witch,
drug-proof
like, and devil-witted, being a knave
poisonous and bred sorcerous like
his kind —
have heard what manner of plague
his south land spawns,
t sort of kith and kin to hell and
him,
subtle in starry riddles and earth's
roots
dog-leeches that kill your soul in
you,
nly body, or both, as Catherine
please,
ier that was to our Mary — have
we not?
nust look to it, and closely look.
orton. My lord,
much being so sure, of this be too;
surely and soon in some wise very
sure
are quit of him with God's help or
without.
arnley. Why, that were well. I
hold you resolute;
y you stay so, and all is well enough.
have talked our time out — you
had all to say —
he thing's carriage — and my mind
to take,
ch with plain heart I have made
you understand.
nind is, he must die then: keep
you there. [*Exit.*

Morton. Had God but plagued Egypt
with fools for flies,
His Jews had sped the quicker.
Enter MARY BEATON.
Is the queen risen,
Lady?
Mary Beaton. Not yet. Was not the
king with you?
I heard him high and shrill.
Morton. Ay, he was here,
If anywhere the king be. You are sad.
Mary Beaton. I am not blithe of
bearing, I wot well,
But the word sad is sadder than I am.
Is he not vexed?
Morton. I have never seen him else,
Save when light-heartedness and loose-
hung brain
Have made him proud and drunken:
as of late
He has been but seldom. There's one
sad at least;
If it be sad to hang the head apart,
Walk with brows drawn and eyes dis-
quieted,
Speak sullen under breath, and shrug
and swear,
If any move him, and then again fall
dumb;
He has changed his fresher manner,
and put off
What little grace made his ungracious
youth
Fair in men's eyes a little; if this
last,
He will not long last in men's lordship
here,
Except by love and favor shown of the
queen.
Mary Beaton. There he sits strong
in surety; yet men say
He is discontent, disheartened, for dis-
taste
Of the like love and favor shown of
her
(Or not the like, yet too much near the
like)
Toward Rizzio; but such men, seeing
visionary,
Run wide in talk, and sleep with speech
awake
And sight shut fast: are you not of my
mind?

Morton. I am most of theirs whose mind is most toward hers,
As whose should be most noble; but in truth
Mine own is moved to hear her gracious heart
Mismade of, her clear courtesies misread,
Misliked her liking, her good will maligned.
Even of his mouth who owes life, breath, and place,
Honor and title, even to that clear good will
To that her grace, liking, and courtesy.
Mary Beaton. You mean our lord and hers and king of Scots?
Morton. As kingly a king as masterful a lord,
And no less hers than ours; as strong each way.
Mary Beaton. And he misreads so much the queen's pure heart
As to mistake aloud her manner of life,
And teach the world's broad open popular ear
His graceless commentary on her mere grace
And simple favor shown a simple knave,
Her chamber-child, her varlet? a poor man,
Stranger, skilled little in great men's policies
— Which is strange too, seeing he hath had some chance
To learn some tricks of courts and embassies,
Being therein bred, and not so very a fool
But one might teach him — yet no doubt a man,
Save for such teaching, simple and innocent;
Only what heart, what spirit and wit he has,
Being hot and close as fire on the old faith's side
And the French party's — if his wit were great,
It might do more than simple service soon,
Having her heart as 'twere by the ear which leans
Still toward his saying or singing; but ye know
There is no peril in him, and the king
More fool than he a knave.
Morton. Well, I know not;
My skill is small in tunes, yet I can tell
Discord between kings' ear and people's tongue,
Which hearing as in spirit I forehear
Harsh future music in a state mistuned,
If such men lay but hand upon the keys,
Touch ne'er so slight a string of policy
With ne'er so light a finger: I would the queen,
For the dear faith I bear her, saw but this,
Or that the lords were heavier-eyed to see.
Mary Beaton. Are they so keen of soul as of their sight, —
To slay wrong as to see wrong?
Morton. 'Faith, with us
The hand is matched against the eye for speed;
And these no slower in stroke of sight and sword
Than their sharp-sighted swift-souled forefathers.
I say not this that you should gather fear
Out of my saying to sow in the ear of the queen;
But for truth's sake; and truly I do not fear
That I have put fear in you, for you seem
Not lightly fearful to me.
Mary Beaton. I would not be,
Where I might keep good heart and open eye,
Nor blind nor fevered with foolhardiness,
As here meseems I may keep; for I see
No hurt yet nor hurt's danger steer in sight,
Save the mere daily danger of high-raised heads
To be mis-spoken and mis-seen of men,
Which is not for high-seated hearts to fear.

ton. Her heart is high enough,
and yours as hers:
hall do well to hold your courage
fast,
ng your wits awake; whereof
myself
e no doubt, howbeit men fear the
queen,
g our bitter folk and faith to fight,
sharp spirit and high-heartedness
lo such things for love's sake or
for wrath's
ls for fear's sake: which were no
less harm
ng her wit and heart against her-
self)
to be coward or witless. Fare
you well:
not doubt but she is well advised.
[*Exit.*
y Beaton. He is but dead by this,
then. I did know it;
et it strikes upon me sudden and
sharp,
thing unforethought on. It is
strange
ve one's foot as mine is on the
verge,
arrowing threshold of a thing so
great,
ve within one's eyeshot the whole
way,
erfect reach of fate from end to
end,
life to life replying and death to
death
the first hour of the night, and I
itcher of the first watch, by whose
lamp
arless sky that grows toward birth
of stars
e unlit earth and obscure air are
seen
s the lamp's self yet not well
alight.
the light of my heart's fire, and
mind
d, I see what fires of storm, what
flaws,
windy meteors and cross-counter-
ing stars,
e through all the watches to the
dawn
And bloodlike sunrise of the fire-eyed
day.
I am half content already; and yet I
would
This watch were through.

Enter the QUEEN, RIZZIO, *and* MARY SEYTON.

Queen. Nay, it is later, sure:
I am idle, I am idle, and flattered: you
say wrong,
To find my sloth some pardonable plea,
Which is not pardonable; a perfect sin,
One writ among the sorest seven of
all;
Enough to load the soul past penitence.
Am I not late indeed? speak truth and
say.

Rizzio. To watchers the sun rises ever
late,
Though he keep time with summer;
but your grace
Keeps earlier than the sun's time.

Queen. 'Tis but March,
And a scant spring, a sharp and starve-
ling year.
How bitter black the day grows! one
would swear
The weather and earth were of this
people's faith,
And their heaven colored as their
thoughts of heaven,
Their light made of their love.

Rizzio. If it might please you
Look out, and lift up heart to summer-
ward,
There might be sun enough for seeing
and sense,
To light men's eyes at, and warm hands
withal.

Queen. I doubt the winter's white is
deeper dyed
And closer worn than I thought like to
be;
This land of mine hath folded itself
round
With snow-cold, white, and leprous mis-
belief,
Till even the spirit is bitten, the blood
pinched,
And the heart winter-wounded; these
starved slaves
That feed on frost, and suck the snows
for drink,

Hating the light for the heat's sake, love the cold:
We want some hotter fire than summer or sun
To burn their dead blood through, and change their veins.
Rizzio. Madam, those fires are all but ashen dust:
'Tis by the sun we have now to walk warm.
If I had leave to give good counsel tongue
And wisdom words to work with, I would say,
Rather by favor and seasonable grace
Shall your sweet light of summer-speaking looks
Melt the hard mould of earthen hearts, and put
Spring into spirits of snow. Your husband here,
Who was my friend before your lord, being grown
Doubtful, and evil-eyed against himself,
With a thwart wit crossing all counsel, turns
From us-ward to their close fierce intimacy
Who are bitterest of the faction against faith,
And through their violent friendship has become
His own and very enemy, being moved
Of mere loose heart to vex you. Now there stands
On the other hand, in no wise bound to him,
But as your rebel and his enemy
Cast forth condemned, one that called home again
Might be a bond between the time and you,
Tying the wild world tamer to your hand,
And in your husband's hot and unreined mouth
As bit and bridle against his wandering will.
Queen. What name is his who shall so strengthen me?
Rizzio. Your father gave him half a brother's name.
Queen. I have no brother: a bloodless traitor he is
Who was my father's bastard born. By heaven,
I had rather have his head loose at my foot
Than his tongue's counsel rounded in mine ear.
Rizzio. I would you had called him out of banishment.
Queen. Thou art mad, thou art mad; prate me no more of him.
Rizzio. He is wise, and we need wisdom; penitent,
And God, they say, loves most his penitents;
Stout-hearted and well-minded toward your grace,
As you shall work him, and beguilable
Now at your need if you but will he be;
And God he knows if there be need of such.
Queen. No need, no need: I am crowned of mine own heart,
And of mine own will weaponed; am I queen
To have need of traitors' leave to live by, and reign
By the God's grace of these? I will not have it;
Toward God I swear there shall be no such need.
Rizzio. Yet if there were no need, less harm it were
To have him easily on your royal side
While the time serves that he may serve you in, —
Less harm than none, and profit more than less.
Queen. He is a misborn traitor and heretic;
And of his own side baffled, a flat fool,
Who thought to have comfort of Elizabeth,
Large furtherance of my sweet-souled sister's love,
Grace and sure aid of her good plighted word,
Her honorable and precious plighted word,
And secret seal to help him; as she durst not,
Yea, she would fain and durst not,

izzio. Please you note —
ueen. It shall not please me; I say
she hath made him kneel,
l this does please me indeed) hath
seen him down,
him and spurned him kneeling
from her foot,
ıy born traitor and subject. David,
nay,
hath thy careful love not made thee
mad,
ose counsel was my sword against
him once?
, thou wast sworn his slayer; and
all that while
held up head against us, thy one
word
strike him dead of all men.
What! hast thou
ly forgot his purpose, were I taken,
speed thee out of life? his secret
bond,
ed with himself in spirit, thou
shouldst die?
t thou not trothplight with that
soulless boy,
he might thee, to rid him out of
life?
and thou knowest how dear a
cause I have,
thou, to slay him when the good
chance comes,
ch God make speedy toward us!
by my hand,
little and light to hold up his dead
head,
s my hope to dip it in his life
e me ride iron-mailed, a soldieress,
hose days through we drove them
here and there,
ward from Fife, and hither and
forth again,
broken to the border; yea, all day
ought how worth his life it were to
ride
in the shot-length of my saddlebow
try my poor and maiden soldier-
ship.
now I am bidden, and you it is
bid me,
h my hand forth forgivingly and
meek
rike with his for love and policy?
He is beaten and broken, without help
of hope,
Who was mine enemy ever, and ever I
knew
How much he was mine enemy; and
now maimed,
Wounded, unseated from his power of
place,
Shall I raise up again and strengthen
him,
Warm and bind up his cold and o'er-
bled wounds
With piteous cordials? nay, but when I
do,
May he have strength to wreak his will
on me,
And I be flung under his feet! be-
side,
He was your mocking-stock this short
while since:
You swore, men tell me, Daniot told it
me, —
Your ghostly man of counsel, — why, to
him,
He says, you swore the bastard should
not bide
With you in Scotland; it made anger
at you,
Put passion in their mouths who bear
you hard,
That you should threaten kinglike.
Hath he moved you
To change your heart and face toward
him at once,
Or do you mock, or are struck mad
indeed,
That now you turn to bid me cry him
home,
Make much of him and sing him to my
side?
Rizzio. For all this, madam, if I be
not mad,
It were well done to do it. He is a
man
Well-loved, well-counselled, and though
fast in faith,
Yet howsoever in strong opinion bound,
Not so much over-ridden of his own
mind
As to love no man for faith's single
sake;
No fire-brained preacher nor wild-witted
knave,

But skilled and reared in state and soldiership.
What doth it need you to misthink of me?
Say it is but this jewel he sends me here
That pleads his part before you; say I am his
And not your servant, or not only of you
Made and again unmakable; 'tis truth,
He hath given me gifts to be his counsel to you,
And I have taken, and here I plead his part,
Seeing my life hangs upon your life, and yours,
If it be full and even and fortunate
In spite of foes and fears and friends, must hang
On his, unbound from these and bound to you.
We have done ill, having so mighty a match,
So large a wager on this turn of time,
To leave the stakes in hand of a lewd boy,
A fool and thankless; and to save the game
We must play privily, and hold secret hands.
Queen. I will not have his hand upon my part,
Though it were safe to sweep up gold and all.
Rizzio. But till our side be strong; then cast him off,
When he hath served to strengthen you so much
You have no need of any strength of his.
Bear with him but till time be, and we touch
The heart of the hour that brings our chance to catch
Hope by the flying hair, and to our wheel
Bind fortune and wind-wavering majesty,
To shift no more in the air of any change,
But hang a steady star; then, when the faith
Sits crowned in us that serve her, and you hold
The triple-treasured kingdom in your lap,
What shall forbid you set a sudden foot
Where it may please you, on their hearts or heads
That in their season were found serviceable,
And now are stones of stumbling? Time shapes all:
And service he may do you, or else offence,
Even as you handle this sharp point of time,
To turn its edge this wary way or that;
And for the land and state, why, having served,
He may be seasonably stript out of these
When you would do some friend a courtesy
Who has still been found secret and Catholic,
A lantern's eye of counsel in close dark,
While he did blind man's service; but till then
Let him keep land and name, and all he will,
And blindly serve to the blind end in trust,
To wake a naked fool. That this may be,
I am firm in faith, may it be but with your will.
Queen. He will not help us beat his own faith down;
He is no hawk to seel and then to unhood,
Fly at strange fowl, and pluck back blind again.
Rizzio. Bethink you, madam, he only of all his kind
Stood out against men hotter in heresy,
Spake down their speeches, overbore Pope Knox,
Broke with his cardinal's college of shrewd saints,
In your free faith's defence, that would have barred you
From custom of religion; and I wot,

re for his help, small help had found my queen
om Huntley or Hamilton, her faith-fellows,
any their co-worshippers with her.
Queen. Thou art ever saying them wrong; they are stout and sure,
en they that strove for honor's sake with us:
eir one least fault I am minded to forgive;
ue friends in faith, my dear own blood and kin,
birthless bastards nor mistitled men.
pleased me bid him into banish-ment,
d shall not lightly please me bid him back.
Rizzio. Yet some men banished for no less a cause,
has been known, you have loosed from banishment
ll you for true heart.
Queen. Nay, I well know it.
u are good and faithful to us, God quit it you,
d well of us loved back; how much, you know,
more than is our fear of men's mis-saying.
me, I find no such foul faultiness
he lord Bothwell but might well be purged
er long trial of English prison-bands
d proof of loyal lips and close true heart
ereout no gaoler could pluck dan-gerous speech,
d then with overpassing to and fro
e strait sea wide enough to wash him white
ixt France and us: and all this jar-ring year
u have seen with what a service, in full field,
in our need he hath served us; nor was it
h matter of treason and nowise par-donable
mix his wits with Arran's broken brain
their device to entrap mine hand with his
For high state's sake and strong-winged policy,
When he was matched with me in most men's mouths,
And found not yet for changeling or for fool.
But howsoever, it pleased me pardon him;
And a stout spear for warden have I won.
I have holp myself in help of him, who now
Hath with good works undone his dead misdeeds,
And left their memory drowned in the under sea
That swept them out and washed him in again,
A man remade; and fail me whoso fails,
Him I hold fast my friend; but those cast out
That rose up right between my will and me
To make me thrall and bondslave to their own,
Giving me prison and them swift banish-ment
Whom I gave honor, and cast the crown away,
And break the old natural heart of royalty,
For foul faith's sake or craft of their miscreed;
That smote with sword or speech against all state,
Not through blind heat or stumbling hardihood,
But hate of holiness and height of mind,
Hateful to kingly truth, haters of kings;
Them though I pardon I would not take to trust,
Nor bind up their loose faith with my belief,
For all assurances of all men born.
Besides, I hate him, singly.
Rizzio. I have said, and say:
Do you as time will turn it; time turns all.
Queen. I do believe there is no man's estate
So miserable, so very a helpless thing,
So trodden under and overborne, as mine.

For first the man that I set up for lord,
For master of mine and mate of only me,
Have I perforce put forth of my shamed bed,
And broken on his brows the kingless crown,
Finding nor head for gold nor hand for steel
Worth name of king or husband, but the throne
Lordless, the heart of marriage husbandless,
Through his foul follies; then in the utter world,
In the extreme range and race of my whole life
Through all changed times and places of its change,
Having one friend, I find a foe of him
To my true sense and soul and spirit of thought
That keeps in peace the things of its own peace,
Secret and surely: in faith, this frets my faith,
Distunes me into discord with myself,
That you should counsel me against my soul.
I pray you, do not.

Rizzio. Nay, I will no more.
But if you take not Murray again to trust
At least in short sweet seeming for some while,
So to subdue him as with his own right hand
And all chief with him of his creed and crew,
Then, cleaving to the old counsel, suddenly
Have him attainted, and being so brought in
By summons as your traitor, with good speed
Have off his head; let him not live to turn;
Choose you sure tongues to doom him, hands to rid,
And be his slaying his sentence; for the rest,
Make to you friends Argyle and Chatelherault
And such more temperate of their faction found
As may be servants to your pardoning hand
If they be separable; but anywise
In pardoning these, forgive not half his fault
With half their pardon; cut no branch of his,
But the root only; strike not but at heart
When you strike him: he hath done and borne too much
To live 'twixt that and this unreconciled,
Having on this hand his conspiracy,
On that your proclamation; his head priced,
His life coursed after with hot hound and horn,
His wife thrust forth hard on her travailing time,
With body soft from pangs and delicate,
To roam in winter-bound and roofless woods:
These things not wholly with your grace wiped off,
And washed with favor and fair-faced love away,
Must work within him deadly and desperate.

Queen. Now
I find your counsel in you, no strange tongue,
But the old stout speech and sure; and this same day
Will I set hand to it. I have chosen the lords
That shall attaint in council these men fled,
Of mortal treason; and some two hours hence
My tongue through their strange lips shall speak him dead
Who is only my heart's hated among men.
I am gay of heart, light as a spring south-wind,
To feed my soul with his foretasted death.
You know the reason I have, you know the right

l he the danger of it, being no fool,
fool he is not; I would he were
but fool.
I feel dancing motions in my feet,
l laughter moving merrily at my
lips,
y to think him dead and hearsed, or
hanged—
t were the better. I could dance
down his life,
g my steps through, treading on his
dead neck,
love of his dead body and cast-out
soul.
shall talk of me to the worm of
hell,
e in death's ear, and with a speech-
less tongue,
my dead doings in days gone out.
Sweet lord,
id, my good friend and my chancel-
lor,
ank you for your counsel.
izzio. May it be
perously mine! but howsoever, I
think
ere not well, when this man is put
down,
ugh Lethington be wily or Melville
wise,
nake your stay of any other man.
ueen. I would I had no state to
need no stay;
witness me, I had rather be reborn,
born a poor mean woman, and live
low
n harmless habit and poor purity
rn to my dull death-day, a shep-
herd's wife,
n a queen clothed and crowned
with force and fear.
izzio. Are you so weary of crowns,
and would not be
n wearier waxen of sheepfolds?
ueen. 'Faith, who knows?
I would not be weary, let that be
of my wish. I could be glad and
good,
ng so low, with little labors set,
little sleeps and watches, night
and day
ng and flowing as small waves in
low sea
From shine to shadow and back, and
out and in
Among the firths and reaches of low
life:
I would I were away and well. No
more,
For dear love talk no more of policy.
Let France and faith and envy and
England be,
And kingdom go, and people: I had
rather rest
Quiet for all my simple space of life,
With few friends' loves closing my life-
days in,
And few things known, and grace of
humble ways,—
A loving little life of sweet small works.
Good faith, I was not made for other
life;
Nay, do you think it? I will not hear
thereof;
Let me hear music rather, as simple a
song,
If you have any, as these low thoughts
of mine,
Some lowly and old-world song of quiet
men.
Rizzio. Then is the time for love-
songs when the lip
Has no more leave to counsel; even so
be it;
I will sing simply, and no more counsel
you.
Queen. Be not unfriends; I have
made you wroth indeed,
Unknowing, and pray you even for my
no fault
Forgive, and give me music; I am
athirst
For sweet-tongued pardon only.
Rizzio. If this be harsh,
The pardon be for fault enforced of
mine.

*Love with shut wings, a little ungrown
love,*
A blind lost love, alit on my shut heart,
As on an unblown rose an unfledged dove;
Feeble the flight as yet, feeble the flower.
*And I said, Show me if sleep or love thou
art,*
*Or death or sorrow, or some obscurer
power;*

Show me thyself, if thou be some such power,
If thou be god or spirit, sorrow or love,
That I may praise thee for the thing thou art.
And saying, I felt my soul a sudden flower
Full-fledged of petals, and thereon a dove
Sitting full-feathered, singing at my heart.

Yet the song's burden heavier on my heart
Than a man's burden laid on a child's power.
Surely most bitter of all sweet things thou art,
And sweetest thou of all things bitter, love;
And if a poppy or if a rose thy flower,
We know not, nor if thou be kite or dove.

But nightingale is none, nor any dove,
That sings so long nor is so hot of heart
For love of sorrow or sorrow of any love;
Nor all thy pain hath any or all thy power,
Nor any knows thee if bird or god thou art,
Or whether a thorn to think thee, or whether a flower.

But surely will I hold thee a glorious flower,
And thy tongue surely sweeter than the dove
Muttering in mid leaves from a fervent heart
Something divine of some exceeding love,
If thou being god out of a great god's power
Wilt make me also the glad thing thou art.

Will no man's mercy show me where thou art,
That I may bring thee of all my fruit and flower,
That with loud lips and with a molten heart
I may sing all thy praises, till the dove
That I desire to have within my power
Fly at my bidding to my bosom, love?
Clothed as with power of pinions, O my heart,
Fly like a dove, and seek one sovereign flower,
Whose thrall thou art, and sing for love of love.

Queen. It sings too southerly for this harsh north;
This were a song for summer-sleepin ears,
One to move dancing measures in men' feet
Red-shod with reek o' the vintage Who went there?
What! hear you not?
Mary Seyton. My lord of Bothwell' foot:
His tread rings iron, as to battle-ward
Queen. Not his, it was not. See it be indeed.
'Twas a good song Something he ha with me —
I thank you for your song — I kno not what.
Let him come in. Sir, be with us t night —
I knew it was late indeed — at suppe time.
Rizzio. Madam, till night I take m loyal leave.
God give you good of all things. [*Ex*
Queen. Doth he mock me?
I care not neither; I know not. St with us.
Enter BOTHWELL.
Good morrow, sir: we bade you, d we not?
Be with us after noon; 'tis not noo near,
And you are truer than your own wor and that,
'Tis a true man's and trusty.
Bothwell. True it should be,
Madam, if truth be true, and I yo thrall,
And truth's for your sake.
Queen. I would know of you —
I know not what — something the was to know.
I would you were not warden — as truth

hink to unmake you — of the marches there.
is a fierce office. You have a royal sword,
least a knightly; I would not see it hacked rough
brawling border dangers.
Bothwell. Anywhere
and, hilt, and edge are yours, to turn and take,
e or throw by; you know it.
Queen. I know it indeed.
have not many hearts with me, and hold
ecious the hearts I have and the good hands.
ldies, we have somewhat with our servant here
at needs no counsel and no ear of yours,
gives you leave. [*Exeunt* MARIES.
I know not why they are gone;
ave nothing with you secret.
Bothwell. Yea, one thing;
u cannot help it; your face and speech and look
secret with me in my secret heart.
Queen. I know not that; I would I did know that.
s yet not twelve days since I saw you wed
my dear friend, and with what eye you know
no would not, for all love that I might make
ld suit to you, give ear to me, and be
mine own chapel at the holy mass
kde one with her; for all the feast we kept,
j jewel of mine bequeathed your wife might buy
nsent of you to take her wedded hand
er the church-rite of her faith and mine;
ld how much love went with your policy,
nnot tell; yet was my will content
tt you should wed her name and house, to bring
race of Gordon on our side again,
l have its ruin rebuilded and its might
Restored to do us service; so you said,
And so I thought I knew your mind to stand;
Being so fast bound to me, I need not doubt
She could but hold you by the hand, and I
That had you by the heart need grudge not that,
While time gave order, and expediency
Required of us allowance; but in faith
I know not whether there be faith or no,
Save in my heart, wherein I know too sure
How little wisdom is to trust in man.
So comes it, as you see, for all my show,
I am ill at heart, and tired.
Bothwell. 'Tis your own blame.
Queen. Yea, now, what would you have me? I am yours to do it:
But you say nothing; yet you say too much.
My blame it is, my weary waste of breath,
My wretched hours and empty bloodless life,
My sleepy vigils and my starting sleeps,
All by my fault — if it be fault to be
More than all men loving, all women true,
To hunger with the foodless heart of grief,
And wither with the tearless thirst of eyes,
To wander in weak thought through unsown fields,
Past unreaped sheaves of vision; to be blind,
Weak, sick and lame of spirit and poor of soul,
And to live loveless for love's bitter sake,
And have to food loathing, and shame for drink,
And see no cease or breach in my long life
Where these might end or die; my fault it is,
And I will kill my fault: for I that loved
Will live to love no living thing again.
Bothwell. As you will, then.

Queen. Nay, do not tread on me;
I am lying a worm out of your way, and you
Turn back to bruise me. I am stricken sore enough;
Do not worse wound me; I am hurt to the heart.
You change and shift quicker than all good things,
That all change quickly: I am fast, and cannot change.
If you do hold me so, fast in your heart,
You should not surely mock me.
Bothwell. I mock you not.
You are looser and lighter-tempered than the wind,
And say I mock you: 'tis you mock yourself,
And much more me that wot not of your mind;
What would you have, and would not.
Queen. Nothing, I,
Nothing but peace, and shall not. By my faith,
I think no man ever loved woman well.
You laugh, and thrust your lips up, but 'tis truth, —
This that I think, not your light lewd man's thought,
But in my meaning it is bitter true.
By heaven, I have no heart for any on earth,
Any man else, nor any matter of man's,
But love of one man; nay, and never had.
Bothwell. I do believe it, by myself I do,
Who am even the self-same natured; so I know it.
Queen. What heart have you to hurt me? I am no fool
To hate you for your heat of natural heart.
I know you have loved and love not all alike,
But somewhat all; I hate you not for that.
When have I made words of it? sought out times
To wrangle with you? crossed you with myself?
What have I said, what done, by saying or deed
To vex you for my love's sake? and have been
For my part faithful beyond reach of faith,
Kingdomless queen, and wife unhusbanded,
Till in you reigning I might reign and rest.
I have kept my body, yea from wedded bed,
And kept mine hand, yea from my sceptre's weight,
That you might have me and my kingdom whole:
What have these done to take you, what to keep,
Worth one day's doing of mine yet? Ah! you know,
For all the shape and show of things without,
For all the marriage and the bodily bond
And fleshly figure of community,
I have loved no man, man never hath had me whole,
I am virgin toward you: O my love, love, love,
This that is not yours in me I abhor,
I pray God for your sake it may be false,
Foolish and foul: I would not have it man,
Not manlike, and not mine, it shall not be,
Being none of love's, and rootless in my soul,
Not growing of my spirit but my blood;
I hate myself till it be born.
Bothwell. Ay, sweet,
You talk now loud of love; but ten days since
Was I not bid love well your friend, and be
True husband to her? what sweet-tongued preacher then
Taught me how faith should best be kept by change
Of passionate fear and pleasure and bright pain
And all their strange sharp sweet solicitudes

or such good gifts as wisdom gives and takes
rom hand to married hand of them that wed?
Whose counsel was this wisdom? whose command
his that set sorrow and silence as one seal
n the shut lips of foolishness and love?
Queen. I bade you not be wise; or, if I bade,
was to be obeyed not.
Bothwell. Then indeed
lid obey not, who did foolishly
do your bidding.
Queen. Mine? did I say, Go?
d I say, Love her? did I say, Hate me?
you must hate to love her. Yea, perchance
aid all this; I know not if I said;
t all this have you done; I know that well.
Bothwell. Indeed I have done all this if aught I have,
ld loved at all or loathed, save what mine eye
th ever loathed or loved since first it saw
nt face which taught it faith, and made it first
nk scorn to turn and look on change, or see
w hateful in my love's sight are their eyes
t give love's light to others.
Queen. Tell her so,
me; I care not though you love your wife
well that all strange women's eyes and mine
hateful to you. Oh, what heart have I,
t jest and wrangle? but indeed I thought
should do well to love her not, but wed,
make you strong, and get us friends — but, nay,
knows I know not what I thought, or why,
en you should wed her: now I think but this,
That if one love not, she does well to die;
And if one love, she does not well to live.
I pray you, go; not for my love who pray,
But that for love's sake we thought well to part,
And if we loved not it was well indeed.
Go.
Bothwell. To what end? and whither? whencesoe'er,
I must come back.
Queen. Not to my feet, not mine;
Where should his end be for a married man
To lie down lightly, with all care cast off,
And sleep more sound than in love's lap? for sleep
Between the two fair fiery breasts of love
Will rest his head not oft, nor oft shut eyes,
They say, that love's have looked on.
Bothwell. By that law,
Mine eyes must wake forever.
Queen. Nay, for shame,
Let not the fire in them that feeds on mine
Strike fire upon my cheeks: turn off their heat;
It takes my breath like flame, and smothers me.
What! when I bid?
Bothwell. You have bid me do before
What you have chid me doing, but never yet
A thing so past all nature hard, nor now
Shall chide me for obedience.
Queen. Well — ah me! —
I lack the heart to chide; I have borne too much,
And haply too much loved. Alas! and now
I am fain too much to show it; but he that made
Made me no liar, nor gave me craft with power
To choose what I might hide at will, or show.

I am simple-souled and sudden in my speech,
Too swift and hot of heart to guard my lips
Or else lie lightly: wherefore while I may,
Till my time come to speak of hate or love,
I will be dumb, patient as pity's self
Gazing from Godward down on things of the earth,
And dumb till the time be: would I were God!
Time should be quicker to lend help and hand
To men that wait on him. I will not wait,
Lest I wait over-long, no more than need, —
By my long love, I will not. Were I a man,
I had been by this a free man.

Bothwell. Be content.
If I have any wit of soldiership,
'Tis not far off from this to the iron day
That sets on the edge of battle, the bare blow,
All that we fight or fret for. 'Tis not like
Men will bear long with their own lingering hopes
And hearts immitigable, and fiery fears
That burn above dead ashes of things quenched
Hotter for danger, and light men forth to fight,
And from between the breaking ranks of war
The flower must grow of all their fears and hopes, —
Hopes of high promise, fears made quick by faith,
Angers, ambitions; which to gather and wear
Must be our toil and garland.

Queen. My heart's lord,
I put my heart and hands into your hand
To hold and help: do you what thing in the world
Shall seem well to you with them, they content
Live with your love, or die. For my one part,
I would I had done with need of forging words,
That I might keep truth pure upon my lips.
I am weary of lying, and would not speak word more
To mock my heart with, and win faith from men,
But for the truth's sake of my love, which lies
To save the true life in me.

Bothwell. It may be
You shall not long need to dress love in lies:
This plighted plague of yours hath few men friends
To put their bodies between death and his.

Queen. Nay, I think not; and we shall shape us friends
Out of the stuff of their close enmities,
Wherewith he walks inwoven and wound about
To the edge and end of peril; yet God knows
If I for all my cause would seek his death,
Whose lips have stained me with report as foul
As seem to mine their kisses, that like brands
Sear my shamed face with fire to think on them;
Yet would I rather let him live, would God,
Without mine honor or my conscience hurt,
Divide from mine his star, or bid it set,
And on my life lift up that light in heaven
That is my day of the heart, my sun of soul,
To shine till night shut up those loving eyes,
That death could turn not from it though the fire
Were quenched at heart that fed them. Nay, no more:
Let me go hence, and weep not.

[*Exit.*

Bothwell. Fire, in faith,
Enough to light him down the way of the worm,
And leave me warmer. She went suddenly:
Doth she doubt yet? I think, by God's light, no:
I hold her over-fast by body and soul, —
Flesh holds not spirit closer. Now what way
To shift him over the edge and end of life,
She laughs and talks of, yet keep fast my foot
On the strait verge of smooth-worn stony things
That we stand still or slide on? 'Tis a shoal
Whereon the goodliest galleon of man's hope,
That had no burning beacon such as mine
Lit of her love to steer by, could not choose
But run to wreck.

Re-enter MARY BEATON.

Mary Beaton. Pray you, my lord, a word.
If you know aught of any new thing here,
You will not be about the court to-night:
If not, of my good will I counsel you,
Make hence in speed and secret, and have hope
Till the next day lighten your days to come.

Bothwell. I had rather the close moon and stars a-night
Lit me to love-bed: what warm game is here,
That I must keep mine hand out?

Mary Beaton. Such a game
As you shall win and play not, or my wit
Is fallen in sickness from me. Sir, you know
I am your friend, I have your hap at heart,
Glad of your good, and in your crosses crossed:
I pray you trust me, and be close and wise,
For love of your own luck.

Bothwell. Tell me one thing:
What hand herein shall Master David hold?

Mary Beaton. I think he will not hold the like alive. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES *and* PEOPLE.

First Citizen. Was it not shown long since when she came in,
If God were glad of her? Two days and nights
Ere she brought strife among us, and again
Two nights and days when first we saw her face,
We saw not once by day the sun's in heaven,
The moon's by night, or any space of stars,
But thick sick mist corrupting the moist air
With drench of darkness, so that scarce at noon
Might man spy man a bow-shot's length away;
And in man's memory on that day of the year
Was never a more dolorous face of heaven
Seen so to scowl on summer, as to speak
What comfort shall come with her to this land;
But then were most eyes blind.

Second Citizen. These five years since
Has God filled full of signs that they might see,
And sent his plagues to open them; and most
This year or twain what portents of his hand
Have writ us down in heaven and trembling earth
For fearful flatterers and for faithless friends
Whose fear and friendship have no part in him,
Who knows not or can read not? Famine, frost,
Storms of stars crossing, and strange fires in the air, —
Have these no tongues to chide with?

Third Citizen. Why, at first
A man that was no seer might see what end
Should come on us that saw the mass come in,
And held our hand when man by man fell off,
And heart by heart was cooled of all its heat
By sprinkled holy-water of the court
In five days' space, tempering the fervent edge
That had been fieriest on God's side: Lord James,
Whose heart should weep now for it, or burn again
With shame to think how he made strong their hands
Who have cast him out among the banished lords
That lack their life in England, kept himself
The chapel-door, that none who loved God's law
Might slay the idolatrous and whorish priest
In his mid sin; and after mass was said
Lord Robert and Lord John of Coldingham,
Who then had put not off our cause, but sat
With faithful men as fellows at God's board,
Conveyed him to his chamber: there began
The curse that yet constrains us, and must fall
On more than these; of whom ye know this John
Is now before the face o' the fire of God,
And ere he died in desperate penitence,
Men say, sent warning to his sister queen
To turn her feet from those unquiet ways
Wherein they tread behind the Pope's to hell.

First Citizen. His life was like his brother's of St. Cross,
As foul as need or friar's or abbot's be
That had no shameful part in a king's race,
And made such end as he that lives may make,
Whose bastard blood is proud yet, and insults
As might a prince's or a priest's indeed,
Being truly neither, yet with either name
Signed as in scorn; these are our lords, whose lust
Breaks down men's doors to fetch their daughters forth,
Even as his townsmen vexed the doors of Lot
Till God sent on them fire, who spares but these
For our shame's sake, because we spare, being men,
And let our hands hang swordless, and the wrath
Faint in our hearts, that though God send none down
Should be made fire to make a fire of them.

Third Citizen. These fools and foul that with them draw the king
To shame and riotous insolence which turns
Past hope and love to loathing, — these, though vile,
Have in them less of poison than men's tongues
Who for the queen's love boast in what brief while
They will pluck down God, and plant Antichrist,
And pull out Knox by the ears: thus Bothwell did,
And yet stands higher than any head save his
Who in disdain of danger fills his hands
As full of gold as are his faithless lips
Of lies and bloody counsels, and requires
No less than part in all their forfeit lands
That live in exile, so to turn his name
From loon to lord, from stranger into Scot,
And next the Pope's exalt it: while this king
Sets all his heart to fleshly foolishness,
The beastlike body that eats up the soul
As a bird snared and eaten; and in fear

f God and Rimmon, with a supple soul,
rooks his lithe knee for craft, and bows his back
either's house, yet seeks no prophet's leave,
or hears his saying that God shall spew the like
it of his mouth.
cond Citizen. Yet this good grows in him,
iat he has fallen in anger with the queen
or her knave's sake that was his closest friend,
iief craftsman and main builder of the match;
ea, half his heart, brother and bed-fellow,
vorn secret on his side.
Third Citizen. There are who think
iey have changed beds in very and shameful deed,
id halved more than their own hearts.
First Citizen. He came here
i the Pope's party, against our kingly lords,
gainst the duke, our first more natural head,
gainst the good-will of all godliness;
id hath he now cast their cords from him? nay,
iis is the stormy sickness of ill blood
velling the veins of sin in violent youth
iat makes them wrangle, but at home and heart,
hatever strife there seem of hands abroad,
iey are single-minded in the hate of God.
d he not break forth into bitterness,
ing warned by Knox of youth and empty heart,
ea, rail aloud as one made mad with wine?
d he not lay devices with this knave
iat now ye say defiles him in his wife,
rid the noble Murray from their way,
iat they might ride with hotter spurs for hell?

Second Citizen. God hath set strife betwixt them, that their feet
Should not be long time out of their own snares.
Here be the men we look for comfort from,
Men that have God's mark sharp upon the soul;
Stout Ochiltree, and our main stay John Knox.
Enter JOHN KNOX *and* OCHILTREE.
Ochiltree. Have you yet hope that for his people's sake
God will leave off to harden her hard heart,
That you will yet plead with her?
John Knox. Nay, I know not;
But what I may by word or witness borne,
That will I do, being bidden: yet indeed
I think not to bring down her height of mind
By counsel or admonishment. Her soul
Is as a flame of fire, insatiable,
And subtle as thin water; with her craft
Is passion mingled so inseparably
That each gets strength from other, her swift wit
By passion being enkindled and made hot,
And by her wit her keen and passionate heart
So tempered that it burn itself not out,
Consuming to no end. Never, I think,
Hath God brought up against the people of God,
To try their force or feebleness of faith,
A foe than this more dangerous, nor of mood
More resolute against him.
Ochiltree. So long since
You prophesied of her when new come in:
What then avails it that you counsel her
To be not this born danger that she is,
But friends with God she hates, and with his folk
She would root out and ruin?
John Knox. Yet this time
I am not bidden of him to cast her off

I will speak once; for here even in our eyes
His enemies grow great, and cast off shame.
We are haled up out of hell to heaven, and now
They would fain pluck us backward by the skirt.
And these men call me bitter-tongued and hard,
Who am not bitter; but their work and they
Who gather garlands from the red pit-side
To make foul fragrance in adulterous hair,
And lift white hands to hide the fires of God, —
Their sweetness and their whiteness shall he turn
Bitter and black. I have no hate of her,
That I should spare; I will not spare to strive
That the strong God may spare her, and not man.

Ochiltree. Yea, both, so be we have our lost lords home,
And the Pope's back-bowed changeling clean cast out
And of a knave made carrion.

John Knox. For your first,
It grows as fruit out of your second wish:
Come but the day that looks in his dead face,
And these that hate him as he hates all good
Shall have their friends home, and their honor high
Which the continuance of his life keeps low.

Ochiltree. Surely, for that, my hand or any's else
Were hot enough to help him to his end.
Yet when this thing is through, and this plague purged,
There stands a thorn yet in our way to prick, —
The loose, weak-witted, half-souled boy called king.

John Knox. It is of him I am bidden speak with her,
Having but now rebuked him backsliding
In God's sight and his name. It may be yet,
Whether by foolishness and envious heart,
Or by some nobler touch left in his blood, —
Some pulse of spirit that beats to a tune more high
Than base men set their hearts by, — he will turn
Helpful to Godward, serviceable in soul
To good men's ends in hate of that they hate.
I cannot say: howbeit, I fear not much
Her love of him will keep him fast to her;
If he be drawn in bonds after her wheels,
It will be but of subtle soul and craft
The cords are woven that hold him. But, for me,
Love they or hate, my way is clear with them:
Not for her sake nor his sake shall our Lord
Change counsel and turn backward; and save his
What will or wit I have to speak or live,
He knows who made it little for myself,
But for him great; and be you well assured,
Love of their love nor doubt of their dislike
Hath upon me more power than upon God.
For now I have seen him strive these divers years
With spirits of men and minds exorbitant,
Souls made as iron and their face as flame
Full hard and hot against him, and their wits
Most serpent-strong and swift, sudden of thought
And overflowing of counsel, and their hands
Full of their fortune, and their hearts made large
To hold increase of all prosperities;

nd all these are not, and I poor man
am,
ecause he hath taken and set me on
his side,
nd not where these were; I am con-
tent alone
o keep mine own heart in his secret
sight
aked and clean, well knowing that no
man born
nall do me scathe but he hath bidden
him do,
or I speak word but as he hath set it
me.

First Citizen. Goes he to Holyrood?

Second Citizen. Ay, sir, by noon.

First Citizen. There is a kindling
trouble in the air;
he sun is halting toward the top of
day;
will be shine or rain before he
come.

Ochiltree. What ails this folk to
hover at our heel,
nd hang their eyes on you so heed-
fully?

John Knox. They should be natu-
rally disquieted,
eing what new wind makes white the
wave o' the time
e ride on out of harbor. — Sirs, ye
have heard
ews of your scathe and of shame done
to God,
nd the displeasure bites you by the
heart,
doubt not, if your hearts be godly
given:
ake your souls strong in patience;
let your wrath
rather as iron than as fuel in fire,
mpered and not consumed; heat
that burns out,
aves the hearth chillier for the flame-
less ash
an ere the wood was kindled.

First Citizen. Master Knox,
ou know us, whereto we would, and
by what way:
is too much patience burns our
cheeks with shame
at our hands are not redder than our
face
With slaying of manslayers who spill
blood of faith,
And pierce the heart of naked holiness.
It is far gone in rumor, how the queen
Will set on high and feed on gold that
man
Who was a scourge laid long since on
the saints, —
The archbishop of St. Andrew's; and
perforce,
Dyed as he stands in grain with inno-
cent blood,
Will make him mightier for our scathe
and shame
Than ere the kindly people of the word
Has made him bare of bad authority.

Second Citizen. Likewise she hath
given her seal imperial
To a lewd man and a stranger, her own
knave,
Vile, and a papist; that with harp and
song
Makes her way smoother toward the pit
of hell.

John Knox. What needs us count
and cast offences up
That all we know of, how all these
have one head, —
The hateful head of unstanched mis-
belief?
For sins are sin-begotten, and their seed
Bred of itself and singly procreative;
Nor is God served with setting this to
this
For evil evidence of several shame,
That one may say, Lo now! so many
are they;
But if one, seeing with God-illumined
eyes
In his full face the encountering face of
sin,
Smite once the one high-fronted head,
and slay,
His will we call good service. For
myself,
If ye will make a counsellor of me,
I bid you set your hearts against one
thing
To burn it up, and keep your hearts on
fire,
Not seeking here a sign and there a
a sign,
Nor curious of all casual sufferances,

But steadfast to the undoing of that thing done
Whereof ye know the being, however it be,
And all the doing abominable of God.
Who questions with a snake if the snake sting?
Who reasons of the lightning if it burn?
While these things are, deadly will these things be;
And so the curse that comes of cursed faith.

First Citizen. It is well said.

Second Citizen. Ay, and well done were well.

Third Citizen. We have borne too long for God, we that are men,
Who hath time to bear with evil if he would,
Having for life's length even eternity;
But we that have but half our life to live,
Whose half of days is swallowed of their nights,—
We take on us this lame long-suffering,
To sit more still and patienter than God,
As though we had space to doubt in, and long time
For temperate, quiet, and questionable pause.

First Citizen. Let the time come—

Second Citizen. Nay, we must make the time,
Bid the day bring forth to us the fruit we would,
Or else fare fruitless forth.

Third Citizen. It is nigh noon;
There will be shine and rain and shine ere night.

Scene III.—Holyrood.

The Queen *and* Rizzio; Mary Seyton *and* Mary Carmichael *in attendance.*

Queen. Is he so tender-tongued? it is his fear
That plucks the fang out from his hate, and makes
A stingless snake of his malignant heart;
He hath a mind—or, had he a mind at all,
Would have a mind—to mischief; but his will
Is a dumb devil.

Rizzio. Why, fear then and no love
Will make faith in him out of falsehood's self,
And keep him constant through unstableness.

Queen. Fear that makes faith may break faith; and a fool
Is but in folly stable. I cannot tell
If he indeed fear these men more than me;
Or if he slip their collar, whether or no
He will be firm on my side, as you say,
Through very lightness; but I think not of him,
Steadfast or slippery. Would I had been that day
Handless, when I made one his hand with mine!
Yet it seemed best. I am spirit-sick and faint
With shame of his foul follies and loathed life,
Which hath no part but lewdness of a man,
Nor style of soul nor several quality,
Dividing men from men, and man from beast,
By working heart or complement of brain,—
None, very none. I will not see him to-night.
I have given command to insure our privacy.
Is it past noon?

Enter Darnley *and* Mary Beaton.

Darnley. You say she hath asked for me?

Mary Beaton. Ay, and complainingly, as though her love
Were struck at by your absence.

Darnley. Love! her love!
It were a cunning stroke should print a wound
In that which hath no substance, and no spirit
To feel the hurt. Well, I will speak to her.

Queen. How like a chidden bondman of his lord

oks my lord now! Come you from penance, sir?
is the kirk put you to no private shame
sides the public tongue of broad rebuke?
e are blessed in your penitence; it is gracious promise for you.
Darnley. Penitence?
Queen. You have a tender faith and quick remorse
at will bear buffets easily; pray God pluck you absolution from their hands
no are godly sparing of it. We have heard
priest of theirs cast for incontinence
rdly with thrice purgation of his shame
deemed himself to kirkward.
Darnley. I hear naught.
Queen. Nay, but you hear when these rebuke you of sin
the full face and popular ear of men;
u hear them surely, and patiently you hear,
d it shows in you godliness and grace
iseworthy from them; for myself, my lord,
ave some foolish petulances in me
d stings of pride that shut me out from grace
sought and bought of such men; but your course
y teach me timelier humble-mindedness
d patience to get favor: which till now
ave never needed beg, and now should prove
very witless beggar. Teach me words,
y you, to move men's minds with; such great men's
your submission purchases to be
od friends and patrons to you; for I fear
ur Knox is not my friend yet.
Darnley. So I think.
dam, I know not what you make of me,
if your jest be seasonable or no;
I am no fool nor implement of theirs,
Nor patienter of their irreverences
Than the queen's self; if you endure such tongues,
Why, I may bear them.
Queen. Well and patiently;
I praise your manhood's temper for it, and am
The happier for your royalty of spirit
That will not feel wrong done of baser men
To be at all wrong done you.
Darnley. Will you think it?
Well then, I am so, I am just your thought;
You read me right, and this our friend reads too,
For I am plain and easy to read right.
Queen. Have you made time to say so?
Darnley. Ay, and this,
That it mislikes me — it gives me discontent
That men should —
Queen. Ay? that men should — any thing —
Bear themselves manlike, or that men should be, —
It is offence done openly to you?
Darnley. Nay, not offence, nor open; naught it is,
Or to me naught.
Queen. Naught as I think, indeed.
You were about to chide us? well it is
You have so humble a wife of us and true,
To make your chidings fruitful, that your words
Bear and bring forth good seed of bettering change.
I pray you, when you chide me, that you make
Your stripes the gentler for my humbleness.
Darnley. I have no mind to jest and jape, and will —
And will not wrangle with you.
Queen. Will, and will not?
They say a woman's will is made like that,
But your will yet is wilfuller than ours.
Darnley. Not as I think.
Queen. God better the king's thought,

And mind more tyrannous than is his place!
Darnley. If I be king—
Queen. And I be kingdomless,
And place be no place, and distinction die
Between the crown and curch— Well, on, our lord.
Darnley. Why am I out of counsel with you? Whence
Am I made show of for a titular fool,
And have no hand in enterprise of yours,
Nor tongue, nor presence? Not alone my name
That is rubbed out and grated off your gold,
But myself plucked out of your register,
Made light account of, held as nothingness,
Might move me—
Queen. Whither?
Darnley. To some show of wrath
More than complaint, if I were minded ill.
Here is a breach made with the English queen,
Our cousin of England, a wide-open breach,
A great-grown quarrel, and I no part of it,
Not named or known of.
Queen. You are the happier man
Heavenward, if blessed be the peaceable.
Darnley. The happier heavenward, being the worldlier shamed;
The less I like it. You have suddenly cast forth
A man her servant and ambassador,
With graceless haste and instance, from the realm,
On barren charge of bare complicity
With men now banished and in English bounds,
But not attaint of treason toward us yet
Nor deadly doomed of justice.
Queen. Not attaint?
Give not your spirit trouble for that; the act
Is drawn by this against them, and the estates
Need but give warrant to their forfeiture,
Now it has passed the lords of th articles.
Take no care for it; though it be swee in you,
And gracious, to show care of you worst foes
You have on earth; that would hav driven you forth
A shameful rebel to your cousin queer
And naked of our foreign favor here
That clothed you with unnatural royalt
And not your proper purple. Forth you say
I have done this wrong?
Darnley. I do not say you have don
Wise work nor unwise; but howbeit, say
I had no part in aught of it, nor knew
With what a spur's prick you provoke her spleen
Who is not stingless to requite it you,
Nor with what scant of reason.
Queen. 'Tis sad truth,
She shows no less disquiet mind tha yours,
Nor a less loud displeasure: she wa kind,
She says, well-willed to me-ward, b my sins,
Unkindliness, and soul's obduracy,
Have made her soft heart hard; an for this fault
She will not ever counsel me again,
Nor cease to comfort my dear brother need
With gold and good compassion; an I have
Even such a sister as brother of her him,
And love alike and am like loved them.
He wills me well, she swears, as sh herself,
And, I'll re-swear it, she wills as we as he.
Darnley. Ay, we know whence th wellspring of your will
Takes head and current; who mu have brave wars
We know, fair field, broad booty sweep up,

ace to win spurs in; and what English gold
st after battle gild his heels with them,
ien he shall stand up in my father's stead,
utenant-general for you of the realm;
d who must have your brother's lands we know,
estiture must have, and chancellorship,
d masterdom in council. Here he stands,
worthy witness to it: do you look on me?
t not you must be the golden sir,
e counsel-keeper, the sole tongue of the head,
e general man, the goodly? Did you send
d Bothwell hard at heel of him cast forth
make his wrong sweet with sweet-spoken words,
d temper the sharp taste of outrage done
d heat in him of anger, with false breath?
y made you not your own tongue tunable
o are native to soft speaking, and who hate
h as good heart as any Scot that hates
land? or is her messenger your fool
ake blows from you and good words alike
it shall chance him cross your morning mood
ry or kindly?
ueen. Sir, our chancellor,
charge you that you answer not the duke.
arnley. Duke?
ueen. Ay, the duke of Rothsay; whom we pray
k otherwhere some seemlier talking-stock
flush his hot and feverish wit upon.
arnley. Your chancellor? why went not such a man
h you before the lords of the articles
Now, an hour back, and yet but half day through,
To help you speak the banished lords to death?
Is't not the heart of the office, to see law
Punish law's traitors, as you bid them be
In the proof's teeth, who are honester than some
You bid be law's justiciaries of them?
Why went he not? 'twere no more shame nor praise
Than here to swell in state beside your own.
Queen. Must we crave leave to bid you twice take leave,
Or twice to ask what would you?
Darnley. Truly this,
A mere mean thing, an insignificance,
If you will once more hear — oh, no-wise me,
But just the man whose name you take in mouth
To smite me on my face with — Master Knox.
Queen. Are you his usher going before his grace
No less than servant to his master-word?
Or is it penitence and submission makes you
In the holy way of honor and recompense
So high in office with him? Say, this time
For the usher's sake I'll speak with the usher's lord:
Yet if I mind 'twas I bade send for him
To speak of you his servant: for I hear
You did not at first stripe submit yourself,
Nor take all penance with all patience, being
Brought hardly in time to harsh humility
Such as we see now; which thing craves excuse
To make you gracious in your master's eyes,
If it be true — I would not think it were —

You brake in anger forth from the High Kirk,
Being there rebuked, and would not sit at meat,
But past away to hawking in pure rage
After an hour or twain of high discourse
Heard with plain show of sharp unthankfulness;
Which that you now repent, and would redeem,
I will bear witness for you to your lord
To make your penitential peace with him.
Let him come in.
Darnley. I am no messenger.
Queen. Where is my chamberlain? bid Marnock here —
Let the man in, and one man only more,
Whoever it be; we'll see him privily.
Our chancellor, and our no messenger,
We have no need of to dispute with him.
Darnley. If I go hence —
Queen. Why, then you stay not here.
Darnley. But if I go at bidding —
Queen. Why, you go:
With the more speed, the less of tarriance made.
Let me not hold you half-way back: farewell.
[*Exeunt* DARNLEY *and* RIZZIO.
I have not begun so luckily, nor set
So good a face on the first half of day,
Now to keep terms with mere tongue-traitors more.
Enter JOHN KNOX *and* JOHN ERSKINE OF DUN.
So once we are met again, sir, you and I.
Set him before us.
John Knox. I am before your grace
Without man's haling or compulsive word:
Nor at these divers times you have sent for me
Have you found need to use me forcefully.
Queen. Well, let that be; as verily meseems
'Tis I find forceful usage at your hands,
And handling such as never prince has borne
Since first kings were; yet have I borne with it,
Who am your natural princess, and sat by
To hear your rigorous manner of speaking through
As loud against my kinsfolk as myself;
Yea, I have sought your favor diligently,
And friendship of my natural subject born,
And reconcilement by all possible means;
I have offered you at your own choice and time
Whenso it pleased you ever admonish me
Presence and audience; yea, have shamed myself
With reasonless submission; have endured
The naked edge of your sharp speech, and yet
Cannot be quit of you: but here to God
I make my vow I will be once revenged.
Give me my handkerchief. I should take shame
That he can shame me with these tears, to make
Mine eyes his vassals.
John Knox. Madam, true it is
There have been divers seasons of dispute
Between your grace and me, wherein I have never
Found you offended: neither now would find
The offence I sought not; yea, I knew this well,
If it shall please God break your prison-house,
And lighten on your disimprisoned soul,
That my tongue's freedom shall offend you not.
For surely being outside the preaching place
I think myself no breeder of offence,
Nor one that gives man cause of wrath and wrong;
And being therein, I speak not of myself

as God bids who bids me, speaking plain,
ter no flesh on earth. Lo, here I stand,
ngle soul and naked in his eye,
strained of him, to do what thing he will,
l dare and can none other. Hath he sent me
speak soft words of acceptable things
adies' chambers or kings' courts, to make
ir ways seem gracious to them? I wot, no.
n to bring God's gospel in men's ears,
faith therein, and penitence, which are
twain parts of it; but the chief o' the land
all the main of your nobility
e God no heed, nor them that speak for God,
ough flattering fear and ill respect of you;
seeing, if one preach penitence to men,
must needs note the sin he bids repent,
should not I note these men's sin who choose
serve affections in you, and wild will,
ier than truth in God? This were lost breath,
chide the general wrong-doing of the world,
not the very present sin that burns
e in our eyes offensive, — bid serve God,
say not with what service.
ieen. Nay, but so
t is it to you, or any saving me,
this man married to me bears himself?
n what sign-manual has God warranted
inquisition of us? What am I,
my most secret sanctuaries of life
private passages of hours should be
Food for men's eyes, or pavement for men's feet
To peer and pasture, track and tread upon,
Insult with instance? Am I only bound
To let the common mouth communicate
In my life's sweet or bitter sacrament,
The wine poured, the bread broken every day?
To walk before men bare, that they may judge
If I were born with any spot or no,
And praise my naked nature? to subject
Mine unsubmitted soul subordinate
To popular sight and sentence? What am I,
That I should be alone debarred, deposed,
From the poor right of poor men, who may live
Some hour or twain unchallenged of the day,
And make to no man answer what they do
As I to mine must render? who is this
That takes in hand such hard things and such high?
Sir, what man are you, that I need account
For this word said, or that, or such things done,
Only to you or mainly, of myself?
Yea, what are you within this commonwealth?
John Knox. A man within it, and a subject born,
Madam; and howsoever no great man,
Earl, lord, nor baron to bear rule therein,
Yet has God made me a profitable man,
How abject I seem ever in your eye,
No member of the same unmeritable.
Yea, madam, this pertains not less to me
Than any of all your noble-nurtured men,
To warn men of what things may hurt the same,
So as I see them dangerous; and herein

My conscience and mine office with one tongue
Crave plainness of me: wherefore to yourself
I say the thing I speak in public place,
That what great men soever at any time
Shall be consenting to your lord's unfaith
Or flattering furtherance of unfaith in you,
They do what in them lieth to cast out Christ,
Banish his truth, betray his liberty
And free right of this realm, and in the end
Shall haply do small comfort to yourself.
And for him too, your husband, it may be
That as he spares not to dishonor God
For your delight, by service of the mass,
God will not spare to smite him by your hand
That faithlessly he fawns on to his loss.
Queen. When was there queen so handled in the world?
I would I could not weep; for being thus used
I needs must never or now. Is this light day?
Am I asleep, or mad, or in a trance,
That have such words to beat about mine ears,
And in mine eyes his present face who speaks?
Erskine of Dun. Madam, I pray your grace contain your mood,
And keep your noble temperance of yourself,
For your high sake and honor, who are held
For excellence of spirit and natural soul
As sovereign born as for your face and place,
Kingdom, and kingly beauty; to whose might
The worthiest of the world, all Europe's chief,
Her choice of crowns, might gladly bow themselves
To find your favor. I beseech you think
That here is no disloyalty designed,
Nor thing dishonorable; for were men mad
Whose wits are whole, and false whose faiths are sound,
The very mouth of madness would speak sense,
The very tongue of treason would speak truth,
For love and service of your royalty;
Blind curses bless, and red rebellion bow,
That came to burn and threaten. Do not dream
That a man faithful Godward and well loved
Can be to you-ward evil-willed, who have
Power on your natural and your born unfriends
To bind their good-will to you.
Queen. Words, all words;
I am weary of words: I have heard words enough
To build and break, if breath could break or build,
Centuries of men. What would they with me, sir?
These my liege folk that love me to the death,—
Their death or mine, no matter,—my fast friends
Whose comfortable balms so bruise my head
It cannot hold the crown up; these good hands
That wring my wrist round to wrench out the staff
God set into mine own; these loving lips
That take my name upon them as to kiss,
And leave it rank with foam of hateful speech?
Must I be dead deposed, or must I live
Stript shameless, naked to the very name,
A crestless creature and displumed that feeds
On charities and chances? will they give

Ie, their queen born, me, bread or dust to eat,
Vith a mouth water-moistened or a dry,
Beggared or buried? shall I hold my head
n shameful fief and tenantry of these
'or their least wind of any wrath that blows
'o storm it off my shoulders? What were I
'hat being so born should be born such a thing
As bondsmen might bemock the bondage of
And slaves contemn for slavery? Nay, no words:
A word may wound, and no word heal again,
As none can me — whom all men's words may wound —
Vho am liable to all buffets of men's tongues,
All stripes of all their scandals — and was born
'o no such fear — and have nor tongue nor wit
'o plead and gather favor — no such grace
As may get grace, no piteous skilfulness —
Only my truth and tears; and would to God
Ay tears and truth for you were wind and fire
'o burn and blow corruption from the world,
And leave pure peace to breed where you plant war,
And make the furrows fat with pestilence
And the grain swell with treason! but, too sure,
'hey too can hurt, and heal not. I am soul-sick
Vith shame and bitter weakness; yet, God's will,
may take strength about me to put off
ome part of shame. Sir, you that make me weep,
y these my tears and my sharp shame of them
I swear you will not laugh to see me laugh,
When my time comes: you shall not; I will have
Time to my friend yet; I shall see you, sir,
If you can weep or no, that with dry eyes
Have seen mine wet; I will try that: look to it.

John Knox. Madam, — I speak in very eye of God, —
I never took delight in any tears
Shed of God's creatures; yea, for my self-sake,
I can but very hardly abide the tears
Of mine own boys whom mine own hand and love
Chastens, and much less can take any joy
In this the weeping of your majesty.
But, seeing I have given you no offensive cause
Nor just occasion, but have spoken truth
After mine office as mine own place craves
Lest I, God's man, be man-sworn to God's truth,
I must sustain, howbeit unwillingly,
Rather these tears drawn of your majesty
Than blood of mine own conscience stabbed to death
Or through my silence of my commonwealth
By my dumb treason wounded.

Queen. A fair word:
I thought it was forgotten of men's mouths,
And only lived in the inner heat of the heart,
Too sure to want the spelling of their speech.
Sir, you shall find it in my very tears, —
This blood you fear for of your commonwealth,
And in the hurts of mine authority
The wounds it lies abed with; what, God help,
Can the head bleed, and not the body faint?
Or wherein should the kingdom feel such maim

As in the kingship stricken? there are you,
If you be true man, and each true man born
Subject, and circled with the bound of rule,
Hurt to the heart. But heartless things are words:
Henceforth I will not mix my speech with yours
In the way of disputation ever more,
Nor set against your tongue the plea of mine
To reason as its equal. Wait you here,
Here in the chamber? you, sir, come with me
To counsel in my cabinet somewhile;
We will return his answer.
[*Exeunt* QUEEN *and* ERSKINE OF DUN.
Mary Carmichael. She wept sore;
I never saw her spirit, so chafed, so melt
And thaw to such mere passion; this one time
He is sure attainted.
Mary Beaton. Ay, she fain would dare
Upon the spur of the hour attaint him; yet
What none dare else, she durst not: they will put
Force of fair words as bridle in the mouth
Of her wild will and reinless.
Mary Seyton. She is wise,
And fights not wisdom, but being counselled well
Takes truce with time and tongueless policy.
What! will the man speak to us? he looks so hard
With such fast eyes and sad; I had not thought
His face so great, nor presence.
John Knox. Ah! fair ladies,
How fair were this your life and pleasurable
If this might ever abide, and so in the end
With all this gay gear we might pass to heaven!
But fie upon that knave, Death, that will come,
Whether we will or will not: and being come,
When he has laid on his assured arrest,
The foul worms will be busy with this flesh,
Be it never so fair and tender; and the soul,
The silly soul shall be so feeble, I fear,
It can bear with it neither gold nor pearl,
Painting of face, garnish, nor precious stones.
Mary Beaton. Sir, for myself, small joy this were to me,
That this life should live ever; nor would I
Care much by praying to stretch my days of life
Into more length, nor much to take with me
Garnish or gold: but one thing I would fain
Have to go grave-wards with me, and keep it safe,
That you have cast no word or warning on,
And yet women, whose hearts are worldly worn
And by no creed of yours consolable,
Nor gladness of your gospel, love its name
As dear as God's; and its name is but rest.
John Knox. Rest has no other name but only God's.
Mary Beaton. But God has many another name than rest:
His name is life, and life's is weariness.
John Knox. Ay, but not his: that life has lost his name;
Peace is his name, and justice.
Mary Beaton. Ah, sir! see,
Can these two names be one name on earth
Can two keep house together that have name
Justice and peace? where is that man i' the world
Who have found peace in the arms of justice lain,
Or justice at the breast of peace asleep?
Is not God's justice painted like as ours,

strong man armed, a swordsman red as fire,
Whose hands are hard, and his feet washed in blood?
were an iron peace should sleep with him,
nd rest were unrest that should kiss his lips.
What man would look on justice here, and live,
eace has no more part in him.
John Knox. Lady, nay,
hat only peace indeed which is of God
ath in the just man not a part, but all,
ut the whole righteous life and heart in him
ill peacefully possesses; who hath not
r loves not justice, he can love not peace,
or peace is just; and that thing is not peace
hat such men love, but full of strife and lies,
thing of thorns and treasons. This were even
s if a man loving a harlot should
raise her for maiden and himself for pure
o love such maidenhood, when any says
hat he loves peace who loves not holiness;
or peace is holy. Yea, and if one seek
e shall find peace where bitterest justice is,
the full fire and middle might of wrath,
ather than where sloth sucks the lips of shame
fear with her foul brother unbelief
ves in adultery; strife is that which springs,
a winged worm and poisonous, of their sheets;
nd in the slumberless and storm-strewn bed
hat very war's self spreads for righteousness
ace as a babe is born.
Mary Beaton. Would God it were!
For 'tis a bitter childbed: these long years
We look for fruit, and none comes forth of it,
But yet more iron travail; and ourselves,
Desiring justice, quite lose hold of peace,
And are distracted with our own fierce want
And hungry need of right unreachable.
Yet it may come, and then shall peace indeed.
John Knox. You talk against your habit.
Re-enter ERSKINE OF DUN.
Erskine of Dun. Master Knox,
The queen will no more hear you at this time,
But with good-will and gracious mind will weigh
Your worth and worthy meaning in your words.
John Knox. It may be she will never hear me more.
Farewell, fair ladies; may God look on you,
And give you chiefly comfort, which is grace.
[*Exeunt* JOHN KNOX *and* ERSKINE OF DUN.
Mary Seyton. Why did you prate so preacher-like with him?
Mary Beaton. I cannot tell by asking of myself,
Nor answer for your asking. Which of you
Shall wait at supper on the queen to-night?
Mary Carmichael. None but her counsel of close hours, Argyle.
Mary Beaton. She sups with them; and in attendance there
Some two or three I heard of,—one of these
No man of arms.
Mary Seyton. What should they do with arms?
More need of lips to sing with.
Mary Beaton. Ay, to sing:
It is no matter of state they meet upon?
Mary Seyton. Are your wits lost indeed, or do you jest?

Mary Beaton. True, it should be for no affairs of state
They sup at nightfall in the lesser room, —
They three, and three to make the music up.
Mary Seyton. What ails you at it?
Mary Beaton. Nothing; I ail naught.
I did but think what music he should make
After this preacher. Let us to the queen.

SCENE IV. — DARNLEY'S LODGING.

DARNLEY *and* SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Darnley. I think our friend of Morton had grown slack
But for my spurring, uncle.
Sir George Douglas. Nay, he is firm:
You do him less right than you do yourself
To think he should need quickening.
Darnley. Oh, I know not:
What should I know? what wit have I to know?
I am a fool, and have no forethought! Why,
But for my resolute instance at this need, —
I said to him, Be resolute, — and since then,
Some six or eight hours gone, I have heard such things
As would put sense and passion in dead bones, —
By God I have; it shall be seen I have.
But are you sure it should be done to-night?
Sir George Douglas. Ay, surely.
Darnley. Well, I see no surety in it.
Methinks now, every day we let him live
Blows hot the popular wrath of all the land,
And makes us surer, when we strike indeed,
That all men's hearts will stab him with our hands.
Sir George Douglas. By which account he might live long, and die
An old white death and woundless. Is not this
The man whereof you told me some while since
How at close midnight, your wife's doors being locked,
You burst them open, and gat hold of him
Hid in a closet of her bedchamber,
Save for furred gown and shirt about the knave
Naked? and must you take him so again,
And he so twice get clear of you, and laugh?
You swore me that: what need to tell or swear,
If he must live still? weeping, with clenched hands,
You swore it, praying me for our shame's sake send
Word to your uncle Ruthven; but what need,
If there were no shame in the thing at all,
Or but so little, as now so little it seems,
There is no haste to slay him?
Darnley. Nay, you carp:
'Tis thus men ever catch at my good words,
To turn them on their tongues, and spit them out
Changed and discolored. He shall die to-night.
Sir George Douglas. Assuredly.
Darnley. I say so, — mark, I say it,
I that have cause: how else could it be sure?
But sure it is, — I say he shall not live.
Let us go seek Lord Morton out again,
And tell him it is sworn we strike to-night.
How many of us have hands in it with me,
Who cannot with mine own hand as I would
Strike — it were shameful to me — were it not?
For mine own hand's sake.
Sir George Douglas. There are hands enough
Without the shame done to your highness' hand:
Sufficeth us we have it set to the bond

hat signs him dead; nor need we sum their names
Vhose hands will strike, not spare, for their own sakes.
Darnley. Well, let us go to make my lord's faith sure
hat it shall be no later than to-night.

CENE V. — THE QUEEN'S CABINET.

The QUEEN, RIZZIO, COUNTESS OF ARGYLE, LORD ROBERT STUART, ARTHUR ERSKINE, *in attendance.*

Queen. Have I not done a queenlike work to-day?
have made attaint my traitors of myself;
Vith no man at my hand to strengthen me,
Iave gone before the lords of the articles,
nd set my will upon them like a seal,
nd they for their part set on their old friends
he bloody seal of treason signed of death
nd countersigned of burning ignominy.
ou are half fearful, you, lord chancellor,
ou my good servant; but I knew their necks
Vere made to take the impression of my foot,
heir wills and souls the likeness of mine own,
nd I have used them for the things they are.
Countess of Argyle. You have been right royal, madam, and your lovers
ave joyful cause to praise you.
Queen. Will you say it,
ho bear as much part in his blood as I
f our dead father's giving? then I think
o other tongue for love of Murray slain
hall sting me though mine own speak off his head,
nce caught up out of England; nay, I think
We shall get vantage of your lord's friend Knox
Ere many days be.
Countess of Argyle. Speed your majesty!
The cord were hallowed that should silence him.
Queen. Ay, though mine own hands twist it. To spin hemp
For such a throat, so loud and eloquent,
Should better please me, and seem a queenlier thing,
Than to weave silk, and flower it with fine gold.
He hath a tongue to tame a tiger with,
Fright into fierce and violent reverence
The fearfullest earth's monsters. I do think
I like him better than his creed-fellows
Whose lips are softer toward me; 'tis some sport
To set my wit to his, and match with mine
The shrewd and fiery temper of his spirit
For trial of true mastery: yet to-day
He made me weep, weep mightily — by faith,
If there be faith in any lips of earth,
I think to live, and laugh at his tears yet.
Robert Stuart. I would the hand were on him that might make
His eyes weep red, and drop out of their rings,
Looking on death. What reason gives him leave,
What right makes room for him to take his way
So past men's patience grown so masterful?
Had I one half word's warrant of your grace,
His tongue should not be long inside his lips.
Queen. I am no wife of Antony, to try
My needle's point against his tongue's edge; yet
I have cause as good as Fulvia's, though his speech
Ring somewhat short of Roman. Here is one

That has that southern honey on his lips
Frozen as it seems up with this galling air,
And not a note left golden, but his tongue
Nipt with the chill to death as with a knife
That cuts us short of music.
Countess of Argyle. Yea, my lord,
Why will you so discomfort the good hour
With tongueless sadness? We have cause to chide,
That, having cause to sing, find song to seek
And thought to find it ready.
Rizzio. I have been sad
These two hours back; I know not what it was
So struck me out of mirth, for I was merry,
And knew not why.
Queen. Nay, if you love me, sir,
You had reason to be merry with my mirth
Who am blithe to be found queen over my foes.
I have been glad all this good day thereof
Save some few minutes that my subject-saint
Vexed even to mere intemperance; but few tears
Wept out that little bitter part of day,
And left it sweet. Have you not heard men say
This heaviness without a root of fear
Goes oft before some good? now should there be
Some new thing hard upon us that will make
All good hearts glad. Have you no song to mock
The doubt away that mocks you?
Rizzio. At your will.
I am something yet in tune for such a song
As joy makes out of sorrow, when the thought
Plays with false grief for joy's sake. Please you hear it
With such light audience as its worth is light?

Queen. Ay, such a note should fit me for this time;
After the tuneless toil of talking day,
A light song lightly brings ill thoughts asleep.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

Lord Love went Maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;
Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad;
Nor dreamed how fleeter
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter
How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden
With red fruit ruined and dead white flower.

How close behind him
Ere man's faith find him,
How strong to bind him
With fears for bands,
Lest once beholden
Of man the golden
God's face embolden
All hearts and hands;
For if doubt were not,
Whose sore shafts spare not,
Large life would care not
For death's poor hour,
Seeing all life's season
By love's sweet reason
Made wise would seem in his eyes a flower.

Countess of Argyle. Did you hear that?
Robert Stuart. What?
Queen. Nothing but sweet words.
Countess of Argyle. I heard a cry i' the wind as of one hurt.
Arthur Erskine. There is no wind up, madam.
Queen. Peace, I pray;
It was your own sense mocked you. Hear it through;
There should be more, and sadder.

Countess of Argyle. Nay, I heard.

RIZZIO (*sings*).

By Love's side flying
As Time went crying
Glad news and lying
In all men's ears,
With blind feet gliding
She came deriding
Their joyous tiding
That ends in tears;
From Time's side failing
As Love sank quailing,
Her strong wings sailing
Made all heads cower,
Her wings untethered,
With fleet thoughts feathered,
Made weak the summer and bleak
the flower.

Hope found no cover
Wherein to hover,
And Love no lover,
And Joy no place;
Till when Time creeping
Had left him sleeping,
Love knelt down weeping
Before her face,
And prayed, soul-stricken,
One flower might quicken,
Though spring should sicken
And storm devour;
She from her bosom
Flung one sere blossom,
Then passed him dead on the last
dead flower.

Robert Stuart. Hark! some one laughed there.
Queen. What does death i' the song?
n they not let love live, but must needs make
s grave with singing? 'Tis the trick of song
at finds no way to end else.
Rizzio. An old trick;
ur merrier songs are mournfuller sometimes
an very tears are.
Queen. Do you hear noises still?
Enter DARNLEY.
no sent you to us?

Darnley. My love to my sweet lady. [*Kisses her.*
Queen. What feet are theirs behind you? Who stands there?
Darnley. Nay, nothing, nay, sweet, nothing.
Queen. I should know —
Judas! [*Seeing* RUTHVEN *in the doorway.*
Darnley. I tell you —
Ruthven. Let that man come forth;
He hath been here too long.
Queen. What hath he done?
Ruthven. So please your highness, how he hath done you wrong
To offend the honor of your majesty,
I dare not boldly say; but this I dare,
He hath done the king your husband's honor wrong
In this past all the rest, to hinder him
Of the crown matrimonial, which your grace
Made his by promise. Other wrongs than this
Are more than I need speak of: for the lords,
He hath caused you banish a great part of them,
And the most chief, and at this parliament
Forefault them as for treason, that himself
Who jets here in his cap and damask gown
Might of your grace be made a lord, and tread
On men more noble: wherefore with good cause
For very love I pray your majesty
Make not yourself his buckler who lacks heart
Save to pluck forth his hanger, and not strike,
But cower behind, and clasp your gown for shield.
Stand from before the window, lest perforce
I hale him hence by the hair.
Queen. Help us, our friends!
Thrust out this death-faced traitor.
Arthur Erskine. Sir, give way.
Robert Stuart. Out of this presence!

Ruthven. Lay no hands on me;
[*Draws.*
Stand; I will not be handled.
Enter FAULDONSIDE *and* SIR GEORGE DOUGLAS.
Queen. Out with him!
Rizzio. Save, save me, madam!
Queen. You are within my ward.
Stand from him, sirs; what! treason!
Fauldonside. Nay, then, thus.
[*Putting a pistol to her breast.*
Queen. Do him no wrong; ye dare not murder me:
If he have sinned, let justice pass on him.
Fauldonside. This cord shall justify him.
Rizzio. Help me! help!
Sir George Douglas. Let go the queen.
Rizzio. Help me, my mistress!
Fauldonside. Out!
Queen. Have mercy!
Rizzio. Mercy! nay, I am innocent!
Save me, sweet lady!
Queen. Will ye slay me too?
Fauldonside. Drag him away; pluck his hands off her.
Rizzio. Help!
[*They force him out.*
Queen. Why does that sheath sit empty on your side?
Where is the dagger?
Darnley. Why, I know not where.
Queen. It will be known hereafter; it shall be
Dear blood to some of you if David's here
Be spilt, my faithful servant's; but may God,
My poor true friend, have mercy on your soul!
Ruthven. Here, take your wife into your arms, my lord,
And bid her fear not. — Madam, have no fear;
We had sooner spend the blood of our own hearts
Than you should suffer harm; and what we do
Is but your husband's bidding. Let them pass:
He shall be kept for this time safe enough
In my lord's chamber here.
Darnley. Ay shall he, safe —
In that same chamber where you used of old,
Before this fellow grew so in your grace,
To come and seek me; but since he so fell
In credit with you and familiar use,
Even if I come to yours I find of late
Small entertainment of you, save so far
As David may sit third with us, and set
To cards with you even till an hour or twain
Be gone past midnight.
Queen. I have heard not said
It was a duteous gentlewoman's part
To seek her husband's chamber, but the man's
To seek the wife when he would aught with her.
Darnley. Why came you to my chamber, then, at first,
And ever till these few months back that he
Became familiar with you? or am I
In any part now of my body failed,
To fall out of your grace? or what disdain
Have you of me? or what offence of mine
Makes you not use me at all times alike,
Seeing I am willing to do all good things
That may become a husband to his wife?
Queen. My lord, of all the shame here done to me,
You have the fault: for which sake I henceforth
Shall never be your wife, nor lie with you,
Nor ever shall have liking of my life
Till I may make you bear as sore a heart
As I bear now.
Ruthven. Madam, for honor's sake,
Be reasonably and timely reconciled
To your wed lord; and with him take advice
Of such good friends as love you. Give me leave:

n faint, and cannot stand to plead with you. [*Sits.*
ng me to drink, for God's sake.
Darnley. Give my lord
up of wine.
Queen. Is this your malady?
e shall slay me or my six-months' child
this night's force and fear, my friends yet live
wreak me of Lord Ruthven.
Ruthven. Be content.
Queen. When word goes forth how I am handled here —
at, am I kinless, think you, without help?
e uncles, and my brother king of France,
lords of all lands living, all heads crowned,
ll be one storm to shake you from the world;
l the Pope with me, and the Catholic king,
l all that live or of my faith or blood,
ll all make way upon you.
Ruthven. I am too mean
t these so many and mighty should take aim
one such poor man here as I am. See,
ou will weigh it worthily yourself,
s is no treason; never till this night
s so good service done you. For myself,
ll make answer to God's charge and man's
I have served you in it.
Queen. What have I done?
at thing am I, that ye should use me thus?
iserable and desertless that I am,
ingdomed of mine honor! I that had
lship of land and natural rule of men
poorer here than any landless man,
weaker than all women. Pray you, sir,
what law's sentence am I made man's thrall?
at lord have I offended that can bid
My face for shame be covered in your sight?
Whom have I wronged? or who hath power on me,
What thing soever I be, to do me wrong?
Who hath given forth judgment on me? what man's right
Calls me his servant? Nay, there is no slave
Men strike without a sentence; and ye strike
Your own right in me and your name to death
With one self-ruinous violence.
Ruthven. Be at peace;
We strike but your own sickness off yourself,
Who cut off him to save you: the disease
That dies of the physician leaves no cause
That you should curse, but thank him.
Queen. Thank? ay, thank —
God give me grace to give you thanks! be sure
Ye shall not lack my memory to it, nor will
To made me worthy of you. What! no more?
[*Exit* RUTHVEN.
I thought his wrath was large enough for me
To find a murderous part in where to die,
And share it with my servant. Must I live?
Sir, you that make death warm between your lips,
And, silent, let fall murder from your mouth,
Have you no kiss to kill me? no love left
To give me poison? Why is he gone forth?
Hath the hot falsehood eaten through your tongue?
Speak.
Darnley. Why, I bade him look to those your friends
That might have risen upon us; hear you that?
[*Noise outside.*

There is a clamor of them in the courts,
But naught to help or hurt now. He is gone
To read our will out in the general ear,
And by proclaiming of my share with them
In this their new-born justice to make sure
Men's hearts that hearken; and lest fear shake our friends,
Or ill-will toward us and good-will toward you
Make our foes strong in malice of design,
To warn them of your brother's present speed,
Who must be here with morning: my device,
My trick to win all faiths that hang on him
And tie them to my service with his hand.
So have we all souls instant on our side,
And you no way to wound us: for by this,
Even with the hearing of my name given forth
As parcel of the bond that writes him dead,
Which is now cancelled with his blood-shedding,
This your good town is with us, and your lords
That stood for you with this man fled or dead,
If they dare strike or stand yet. What shift now?
What wit? what craft?

Queen. My friends driven forth the court?
No help upon my side? The town raised too?

Darnley. We had no heart nor wit to work with, ha?
We were your fools, and heartless?

Queen (*at the window*). Help, all friends!
All good men help your queen here! Ho, my lord,
My lord the Provost!

Darnley. He is raised indeed.

Queen. Help for the queen! help, Provost!

Darnley. Peace, I say;
You may fare worse: these are wild hours.

Voice without. Sit down;
You shall be hewn in pieces if you stir,
And flung into the Nor'-Loch.

Darnley. Nay, be wise;
Pluck not their madness on you.

Queen. Oh, your love!
It shows now kindly in you.

Re-enter RUTHVEN.

Ruthven. All is sped;
The lords of the adverse party being roused up
And hearing with what large applause of men
The reading of our sentence in the bond
And names subscribed, and proclamation made
Of Murray even at heel of the act returned,
Was of all mouths made welcome, in fierce haste
Forth of their lodging fled confusedly
With no more tarriance than to bring their lives
Clear of the press and cry of peril at hand,
And their folk round them in a beaten rank
Hurled all together; so no man being left, —
The earls of Huntley and of Bothwell gone, —
To lift a hand against the general peace,
The townsmen, of their surety satisfied,
Brake up with acclamation of content
For the good comfort done them in this deed.

Queen. What have ye made my servant?

Ruthven. A dead dog.
His turn is done of service.

Darnley. Yea, stark dead?

Ruthven. They stabbed him through and through with edge on edge
Till all their points met in him; there he lies,

t forth in the outer lodge, a piteous knave
l poor enough to look on.
Queen. I am content.
w must I study how to be revenged.
Darnley. Nay, think not that way: make it not so much;
warned, and wiser.
Queen. Must I not, my lord?
1 have taught me worthier wisdom than of words;
l I will lay it up against my heart.

ACT II. — BOTHWELL.

ne, from March 10, 1566, to February 9, 1567.

ENE I. — THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER.

ter DARNLEY *and* ARTHUR ERSKINE, *severally.*
Darnley. Is the queen risen?
rthur Erskine. She has not slept, my lord.
y say she is in some peril of mishap
ough the sore handling of this violent night, —
tal mishap it may be.
arnley. Ay! who say it?
at should be mortal to her? she was not sick,
near enough her danger.
rthur Erskine. I am no leech:
ly the fright of murderous menaces
noise of swords is held medicinal;
savor of a slain friend comfortable,
his blood balm: if these be healthful things,
have given her weakness physic.
Enter the QUEEN.
ueen. Ah, our lord!
es he with death about him? I could take it
readily as condemned men take reprieve,
of a life much deadlier than itself
th would reprieve me.
arnley. I am come to bring you help.
Queen. You are ever helpful, even at all needs good,
For stroke or speech, good always. I am weak;
Let me have execution swift or soft;
Here is no strength to suffer.
Darnley. Sit, and rest.
Queen. Nay, I can stand; or should I kneel, my plight
Were one with my new fortune. You may go:
I have but private penitence to do,
And privy grace to get me; for indeed
I were stark mad to hope by any mean
For public pardon; I am condemned, and have
No hope but of such pity as dead men gain
Who living found no grace in the great world.
[*Exit* ARTHUR ERSKINE.
Now, what death, sir?
Darnley. You think not as you speak;
Your thought has other business than your tongue,
And death has no part in it.
Queen. I am assured
I must not live.
Darnley. Whose doom has passed on you?
Not mine; I would not have you go in fear:
You may be safe as I am.
Queen. As you, my lord?
I think I may, and yet may chance but find
A little day of surety.
Darnley. By mine honor,
My word and place of sovereignty is pledged
For your fair usage; they that unseat you
Shall find no king in me.
Queen. Nay, I think not.
Darnley. As they would have me friend and firm to them,
I told them, they should use you royally,
No state or privilege plucked off you; nay,
I have no thought by stolen strength of yours

To increase myself out of your weakness; only
I would have royalty remade in you,
And in your honor an honorable part;
See the state in you and the name shine fair,
And in your praise mine own praise perfected
As parcel of it, and in your good fame
Mine own fame stablished; as from your repute
Shaken or sullied, my name too takes soil,
And in your insufficience I wax weak,
So would I have the grace I gain and strength
Redound to you-ward; who being queen indeed,
I cannot seem unkingly.
Queen. 'Tis well thought.
It was my curse to know not in good time
How high a sense and royal of itself
I had in you so near me.
Darnley. That your thought,
Misdeeming me worth no more weight with you,
Hath brought us to this breach. Now lies it in you
To make all whole; these lords that in my name
And for mine ends and with my leave rose up
To rid out peril and scandal from us all,
And make red-handed witness of themselves
Against the shame and scathe of royalty,
Are not the traitors of your thought, but keep
Faith flawless toward the personal empire here
And spirit of rule, dishonoring not the law
By forceful chastisement of secret breach
That did it bloodless violence; this blood shed
Must heal indeed the privy hurt of law
And all but death of kingship, in such pass
Wasted and wounded; but no hand of theirs
Would stab through you your holy majesty,
Cut off all life of law with yours, and make
Authority die with you one visible death;
No thought put out your office, though yourself
Were found come short thereof, to leave this land
A kingless kingdom; wherefore with good-will
I counsel you make peace with their designs
And friends with mine intent, which for us both
Is but all power and honor.
Queen. So you see it;
But were your eyes no flatterers of themselves,
The sight were other: yet for my poor part
I cannot care though power be out of sight,
Save that mine honor visibly is marred
By wreck in you of either; for indeed
Nor power nor honor shall hang on to you
If you must wear them but at will of men,
And by strange leave of chance authority
Reign or not reign. But all concerns me not:
Rule as you may, be lord of that you can,
I can contend not with your lords, or you,
Their master-servant. Pardon me, I am weak,
A feeble simple woman, without stay,
And witless of your worth; yet I might fear
Their policies were no good friends of yours,
Could we see all. Men's hearts are manifold,
Not made of glass like women's such as mine,
At once transpicuous and perceptible
To eyes like yours that look their faults through; yet

erchance you see more faults than lie there, spots
hat are not natural to us; or make too much
f our light thoughts and weakness; yet, your pardon:
ou have reason in it, being more wise than we,
nd stronger in your regency of soul;
may be you do well to bear me hard,
nd I do ill who think to counsel you;
'is no great matter; for in no great while
y weakness will be medicine to itself,
nd end as I do: no default of mine
ut must by dying be curable; and God knows
little think to live.
Darnley. Why, have no fear;
ou see I stand 'twixt you and all such threat.
Queen. Nay, I see not; but though you be my friend,
ow far soever you stand out for me,
here is one threat that no man's help in the world
an bring to nothing: here it speaks in me
ortal; I know the word inevitable
hat without breath or sound has called me dead;
would not plead against it.
Darnley. Nay, you dream;
ou jest or dream.
Queen. I do not: I am dead.
hat! have you slain in jest, or in a dream
ave I seen death, and felt him in my flesh,
elt my blood turn, and my veins fill with death,
nd the pang pass and leave me as I am,
ead? for my state is pangless, and my pain
erished: I have no life to bring forth pain,
r painful fruit of life; I think in pity
od willed one stroke of sheer mortality
ould kill all possible pain and fear in me,
ll after-chance of ill; I cannot die
Twice, and can live not with my dead self here
Violently slain. I am sure I have no child.
I would but pray, if I had breath to pray,
For mere shame's sake and pity's, I might have
My women with me; and was not born to want
What our most poor bare natural womanhood
Seeks not in vain of meanest people: more
I seek of no man's mercy.
Darnley. You shall have it;
But this is fear and shaken heart in you —
I trust not very danger.
Queen. I tnat know
Must bear the peril and the sense alike,
And patiently can bear, so but I have
Hope of your heart made soft towards me; sir,
Howe'er I have been untoward and confident
In my blind state and sovereign folly, now
God knows me if I have not need of love
Who have so much of pardon.
Darnley. Is this sure,
Such instant and such perilous press of time, —
Or but your thought it may be?
Queen. Nay, my thought!
Is it my thought I am stricken to my death?
Is it my thought you have no pity of me?
Is it my thought I had looked at other time
For other joy of childbed, and such pangs
As bring glad women honor? not this death
That sunders me from fruit of mine own years
And youth and comfort, and mere natural hope,
And love that looks on many a worse than me?
Is it my thought that for small fault of mine,

And little lack of love and duteousness,
I am brought to shame and mortal chastisement?
Is it my thought love is not dead in me
For all this chastening? and my penitence
Wherewith I weep on my least wrong-doings past,
And faith wherewith I look for pardon yet,
For grace of you — is all this but my thought?
Darnley. By heaven, I will not have you wronged of them.
You shall live safe and honorably.
Queen. My lord,
Who lives in such times honorably or safe,
When change of will and violence mutable
Makes all state loose and rootless? Think you, men
Who have dipped their hands in this red act with you
Will, as they wash them, so wash off their hearts
The burning spot of raw malignity
And fire and hunger of ambition made
So proud and full of meat, so rank in strength,
So grossly fed and fattened with fresh blood?
Is it for love of your name more than mine
These men that fought against my love of you,
And made rebellious wars on my free choice,
Smite now my very head and crown of state
In this night's hot and present stroke? Be sure
It is the throne, the name, the power in us,
That here is stabbed and bleeds from such a wound
As draws out life of you no less than me
If you be part of majesty indeed.
Yea, howsoe'er you be now borne in hand,
They will but use you as an axe to smite,
A brand to set on fire the house of state
And in the doing be burnt up of itself.
Why, do but think with now more temperate blood
What are they that have helped you to this deed?
What friends to you? what faith toward royalty,
And what good-will and surety of sound mind,
Have you found in them? or how put in proof?
What bond have their loves given you to confirm
Their hearts toward you stable? Nay, if this
Be all my pledge for honor and safe life,
They slide upon a slippery ground indeed.
Darnley. The pledge is mine, not theirs: you have my word;
No warrant of their giving, but of me.
What ails you to go yet in fear of them?
Queen. Alas! I know not whom I need yet fear.
What men were they who helped you to this deed?
Yet it avails not me to know. I think
The fierce first root of violence was not set
Of you nor of your uncles, though I know
They of your mother's kinship love me not;
But though their hearts, albeit one blood with yours,
Be bitter toward me, yet being of your blood
I would fain think them not so hard; and yet
It was no gentle sight I had of them,
Nor usage; I can see their eyes burn still,
And their brows meet against me. Such a sight
Again might wind all suffering up in me,
And give it full release.
Darnley. It was their plot;
That is, for love of me they felt the offence

t their hearts. I did not set them on;
vrath and shame's suspicion for my sake
d and envenomed; then your policies too,
njuries done the popular weal, the state
r mishandled, — this was all men's talk,
uncle's chiefly, Ruthven's, and his word
hot in the ear of Maitland and Argyle,
ing the wrong done and the further fear,
wide in issue and large in likelihood
all wrong done already; nay, and plain;
vould have given the state up to strange hands,
for strange ends; no dreaming doubt of mine,
ery vision, proof: they held it so;
by my faith, I with them.
en. Morton too?
ıot his wit part of your wisdom?
rnley. Ay;
all heads highest, all subtlest, could not choose
e one judgment and one counsel here,
ch a biting need; yea, common fools,
senseless knaves might see it.
en. Yea, visibly.
harpest wits and hands put armor on
forth strong against me; little doubt
ools and ignorance and the common mouth,
ery dust o' the street, the dross of man,
needs take fire with blowing of such wind,
tir at such men's passage: their mere feet
g would raise me up such enemies
the bare ground. Ruthven — you said his breath
Was first to heat men's hearing with strange words
And set their hearts on edge; and at his touch
The quick-eyed Maitland and loose-souled Argyle,
Keen to catch fire or fear from other men's;
And the full-counselled Morton — by my life
(That's but a little oath now) I think strange
To be at all alive, and have such men
So sore unfriends and secret, and their wits
So sharp to set upon so slight a thing.
How grew this up amongst you?
Darnley. Why, you see it;
No need to set men on; their swords were made
Of your own follies; yet have comfort; I,
That was so little made of, so less worth,
In your late judgment, will alone be guard
And buckler of you; come what counsel may,
It shall not hold against you with my will,
And cannot work without.
Queen. Nay, that were hard.
I thank you; but what counsel will they take,
Think you, which way to deal with me? My soul
Is womanly distempered and distract
With doubts of them: no fear of your good mind,
Of your firm love and fruitful; but, alas!
I am no strong man as you my guard, and ache
With new faint fear of their fresh angers: then,
This watch on me, my ways and rooms barred up,
No help nor issue, shakes and sickens me
With pangs for every stroke in the hour, that says
I am so much more time prisoner.
Darnley. For your guard,

It must be later taken off; the rest
I will find mean of help for. They are now
In council with your brother, new brought home
With seal from me of pardon to reverse
Your fresh and rash attainder, in my name
Now cancelled and made strengthless; and I think
There must three judgments be debated of,—
Whether, for hurt done to the common state
And treason to succession, you must bear
Penance of death, or life's imprisonment,
Which fear not I will have them put in form,
Nor see it pass upon you; the third mean
Is for some season that you be in ward
In Stirling Castle, till your warrant given
And free consent to this late justice done,
And to the new faith stablished in the realm
By right and rule of law, religiously,
And to mine own investiture as king.
Now for no fear at all or doubt of them,
But very love and good desire toward you,
I will go plead your part, and take them sign
Of seasonable submission; with which word
I doubt not but to reconcile their thoughts,
And bring their loves back bounden to your feet.

Queen. Neither do I doubt. Let them draw this bond,
I will set hand to what they will of me.
To seal you king needs now no grace of mine,
Hardly my leave; and for their faith, it has
Too firm a foot for my poor power to shake,
Had I the will now molten in me strong
As ere the fire of fierce necessity
Had made it soft and edgeless; f
their deed,
Say, if they hold my word of pardo
worth
More than mere scorn, I am bound
thank them, being
Masters of me and of my wrath or wi
And needing show me no such courtes
And if it please them take mine oa
and hand
To sign them safe, and mark them fro
all charge
Sackless and scatheless, let them tak
it; alas!
I thought well they might rather tal
my life,
And yet I think well they would tal
indeed
But for your safeguard of me; wou
they not
Slay me? nay, by your honor tell me
nay,
I know they would, had I no guard
you,
Slay me defenceless.

Darnley. Have no fear: I ha
sworn
They shall not touch you roughly.

Queen. Swear again,
That I may quite rest confident; a
yet
Swear not; I would not seem to ho
you fast
To your own peril; better were I dea
Than you fell in their danger for
sake.
Ah! and I know not, I may hardly thi
I have you surely on my side.

Darnley. By heaven,
You shall want nothing of my help
love.

Queen. How had you heart to go
near my death?

Darnley. I had no mind to hurt y

Queen. None? well, none—
I will not think it; yet I was nigh de
You saw my very death here at
breast
Where your child is not yet—I
not think
To feel instead there murder's iron l
For his soft suckling mouth.

Darnley. Come, think not of it.

Queen. I had not time to think of it
indeed.
t I think now you will have hardly
power
match your will to save me, if their
will
all yet be mortal to me: then I saw
u had not power, or had not will;
and now
now not which you have yet.
Darnley. They shall find
ave power enough and will to turn
them.
Queen. Well —
an, then, on your hand. If you were
mine,
ough they were subtler and more
strong in hate,
ey should not hold me here in peril.
Darnley. How?
Queen. No matter, so their guard
were less on me.
Darnley. You would take flight,
then?
Queen. Ay, with you for wing
lift me out of prison.
Darnley. Whither?
Queen. Nay,
m but the fool of your keen flatter-
ing wit,
o let you see my little hope that
lives
see my some day sunnier: yet God
knows
thout light of you it were lustre-
less.
an look forth not, or heave up my
hand,
with your help to stay me.
Darnley. Surely no,
you stand now, you cannot; and I
were
aithless fool to mine own fortune, if
osed you out of sight for wanton-
ness,
o have you now in hand: but for
all this
nay be flight were no such unwise
mean
assure our free and mutual power
on them,
I show them simply subject; as it
is,
They have some show of hold on us
which makes
Our reign and freedom questionable
and slight:
I see some reason in it.
Queen. Why, do you think
That you being here their gaoler in
their eye
Can be their king too, or not rather
they
Lords both of gaol and warder? they
will hold you
But as the minister of their power on
me,
Of no more office than a doorkeeper
Nor honor than their headsman; but
fled hence
You are very king indeed, by your own
hand,
Lord of the life you give and majesty,
By no man's furtherance and no grant
of theirs
Made pensioner and proxy for their
reign
Who should bear rule and you the sem-
blance, worn
As mask of all their faces, glove of
hands,
And hollow trumpet blown of all their
mouths,
But mine and all their free and sove-
reign king.
Darnley. Why, so I say; they must
be borne in hand.
Look you, we must not set their fears
on edge;
They shall suspect not: I will take
them word,
And bring them to you for your bond.
Queen. Meantime,
I will but walk an hour here hand in
hand
With my good brother; let me speak
to him
While they shall draw the schedule.
Darnley. I will bid him
Attend you, and your women; but be
sure
You take him not to counsel: he is
wise,
And full of malice; let him not be
part
Of our new mind.

Queen. He shall not.
Darnley. But you smile:
What should he do to know it?
Queen. He shall not know.
Darnley. Well, you shall see him, and they take off your guard;
I will make sure: but when and by what means
Think you to fly?
Queen. To-night.
Darnley. God help your wit!
To-night?
Queen. Before the change of watch; I have said:
Weak as I stand, and burdened, and soul-spent,
I will be hence. Mistrust me not for strength;
My soul shall make my body like itself,
A servant armed to wait upon my thought
And page my purpose as its minister
Till the end be held in hand. This guard removed,
I will find ways out to win forth to-night,
Fear not, and servants. Go now to the lords
With all submissive mild report of me,
And bring them to receive my word and hand
To confirmation of what bond they please
For pardon and possession of their will;
And for your kingship — sir, assure yourself
That in few hours it shall be seen and sure
You shall need never seek their loves again,
Or hands to help you to it, or tongues to cry,
Nor be called king by will of any man,
Nor lord by choice of any friend on earth.
Darnley. Nay, I would heed no voices.
Queen. And be sure
You shall not build your power on loves of theirs,
Nor live by their election. Go, and thrive:
Think how my faith and hope and love in you
Find all their rest and stronghold, and on them
Set up your trust and standard of your strength.
[*Exit* DARNLEY.
So much is done; go thou, then, first to death;
For from this hour I have thee. — Heart, lie still,
Till I may make those mightier traitors mine
That shall be swords for me to smite him with,
And then be free as fire.
Enter MARY BEATON.
Hast thou no news?
Mary Beaton. The lord of Bothwell lies at secret ward
To bear you forth of peril here by force;
He has gathered up his men beyond the walls
To break this guard upon you when you will,
If at your suit it shall not be withdrawn;
Here is his token brought me privily
For your own hand.
Queen. No, in my heart it is,
My love and lord, thy token; this poor heart,
That, ere mine ear is smitten with thy name,
Hears it, and turns to springing fire. What thanks
Would I not rather pay than these of words
For this thy loving speed? Yet send him these,
And bid him, I would fain say come, but wait
Till I have tried my traitors; if my tongue
Win them to slack their hold on me to-night,
We may speed surelier; if their hands hold fast,
Then let him smite and slay and set me free.
I would have all their heads here in my lap,

l him, not one or two slain sud-
denly,
t their blood shed may seem not
spilt by chance,
lost and won in hazard of affray,
sacrificed by judgment, and their
names
o would have made of royalty in
me
n, and marred the general name of
king,
ll with their lives be perfectly put
out,
ally ruined; wherefore if I may
ill steal forth with subtle help of
words,
break their bonds with violence;
in which hope
him watch close.
[*Exit* MARY BEATON.
And when his watch is done
vill be morning, and the sun shall
break
fire for them that had their hour by
night
l light for wrath to see them and to
slay.
nter ARTHUR ERSKINE, *introducing*
MURRAY.
rthur Erskine. Madam, my lord of
Murray.
ueen. Ah! my brother,
l you been here, they had not used
me thus.
Murray. I am sorry, madam, such
things should be done
even the strain of sharp necessity
make but fierce and bitter.
ueen. Is this all?
, it was necessary then and just,
I must seem and strive to think it
was,
ou say so. But in my present sight,
v when a feather's or a flower's
weight borne
ht make life stoop within me, sense
break down,
strong capacities of nature fail;
v when the hardest heart with iron
bound
ht turn to very mercy for my sake,
e in mine eye to do my friend to
death —
For howsoe'er ye hold him, yet being
dead
I will not say but he was friend of
mine
Who lies now dead and slaughtered, —
nay, by heaven,
I will not cast that name of friend away
Because the man my friend is slain for
me, —
I say, to kill him at my knee, to stain
An unborn child's brow with his mur-
dered blood,
To affray with sanguine hands, shake
with sheer blows,
The weak and holy warders of the
womb,
The reverence and remembrance of us
all
For that which bare us hidden before
birth
And after was called mother, — oh, this
deed,
This, though all law were cast out of
the world,
All grace forgotten, — this, you will not
say
But they did ill who did it. What! you
weep?
These tears are made of our dear
father's blood,
Who left in each of us such part of him
As must yearn each toward other, and
divide
At need their mutual suffering: I knew
well
I need not fear to find not in your heart
Some natural seed of comfort.
Murray. That I weep
I take no shame, to see you; but mine
eyes
Receive more comfort than their tears
can give
To see, for all this rash and ruthless
night,
Yet you stand up unwounded, and your
heart
Is left you to put spirit in your speech
Not like a sick man's. If you have no
hurt,
No hurt is done, though they did vio-
lently;
For this man's life was as a present
death

To the well-being and peace of all your state,
Which, by the force of justice done on him,
Stands now in surety. I would pray you make
Your profit of your pain herein, being wise,
As you well may; for this was not the man
That you saw slain, but the man's policy,
Stabbed through with all their daggers; and you see
How it lies dead and outcast. I beseech you,
For your own love and honor of high rule,
Set not your heart toward it to raise it up
That men would bury, lest the graveyard reek
Of dead men's craft and strange men's creeds brought back
Prove poison to you.

Queen. I will do what men will.
I must not die, then?

Murray. There are those would have it
For scandal and offence cast on the realm
By shame done to the popular commonwealth
In majesty made shameful; as they say
Through you it hath been, and your dealings known
With this dead friend: some that would leave you life
Spake of life spent in sharp imprisonment
Unto your death's day: but by mine award
You are quit of either danger; you must live
But under guard till you by word approve
This man's despatch for necessary and just,
Submit yourself to call your husband king,
And own the true faith rooted in this realm
For lawful and for sovereign here o rule.
So much you shall.

Queen. Nay, I will more than this.
I will seal now what you will have me seal,
What bond soever: let them come to me,
Who wrought this murderous matter but last night,
That I may sign their pardon with my tongue
Ere they can crave or threaten. Le them come:
So shall my perfect purpose be more plain
Freely in all things to submit myself—
I have your word already—to thei will:
Ay, even with all my new submissive heart,
As else I cannot choose; for what am I
That I should think much to submi myself?

Murray. You shall do wisely to kee faith with them,
And make your word your action' measure: so
Shall hearts now loosened from you b made fast,
And love reclaimed wait on you loyall
Through all your land's length. See the lords are come.

Enter DARNLEY, MORTON, *and* RUTH VEN.

Queen. Good morrow, sirs; ye gav me no good night,
Yet are you welcome even as life o death
Were welcome to me, coming with you will:
For without love of my good lords m life
Were scarce worth holding out again their will;
But, if it please them I should die n yet,
For their love's sake I give it welcom Sirs,
I have heard what terms ye lay upo mine head,
And bow beneath them willingly, bei sure

but meet I should submit myself,
but fit mere majesty bow down
take the burden by good men and
wise
osed upon it; nor shall this be
hard;
what ye did so suddenly and swift,
ere be power of pardon in me, here
h as good heart even as ye did the
deed
I forgive it; nay, I should give you
thanks
t ye vouchsafe of me to be forgiven;
what am I among you? Let the
bond
lrawn between us presently to sign,
le for an hour's space I will walk
and wait
e with my noble brother, hand in
hand,
heart reposed on heart, eyes an-
swering eyes,
h pure plain faith: for wha' now in
the world
uld lies or dumb dissembling profit
me,
ugh I were natural liar? as I do
trust
hall not find me, but most faithful;
yet,
were falser than the foam of the
sea,
wilfuller than wind, what should I
do,
g yours, to mock you and myself,
and lie
inst mine own life? for ye see me,
sirs,
I stand bare between you, without
strength,
our mere mercy, with no friend on
earth
e will be mine unfriends; and I
think
ive but by your grace and leave,
who might,
were minded, speak me out of life
ign me dead with smiling; I were
mad
lay with lies, who feel your hands
on me
eavy as they are, and have no hope
to be pitied and believed of you.

I pray you, then, have faith in me, who
live
In your faith only, and, if it fail me here,
Must die the lowliest death in all the
world,
And no man's hand to help me.
Darnley. She says truth:
There is no hand.
Morton. Madam, though faith stand
fast,
Yet fear hath something here to say of
you,
And wisdom to remember. We must
think
That what is done in service of yourself
You cannot hold good service when it
comes
So masked in blood, so vizarded like
death,
As this of ours doth; and that yet in
time
You may find mean to wreak your
wrath on us
For having strangely served you, and
perforce
Given desperation and the dangerous
time
So desperate a deliverance from de-
spair.
We have saved you in this service done
the state,
Who must have else been broken in the
breach
Of the state's order and the popular
law,
By this man living violently misused;
But cannot hope yet for such thanks of
you
As even the deed deserves whose fierce
despatch
Has shaken you with thunder, and its
flame
Still makes your eyes blind to the good
work done,
And sharp need felt of it: so must this
be,
And so must we take heed lest, being
yet blind,
We give you scope and mean to hurt
yourself.
Queen. I did not think the thing was
yet alive
That could fear me.

Darnley. Nay, look you, she says right:
We have no room to fear her.
Queen. Lo, my lords,
How dangerous and how strong a thing it is
That threatens here your state and safety! see,
It is no less than woman, and unarmed,
Half dead, unfriended, hard on child-bearing,
Naked of arms or means: it were not wise
To leave unguarded, without spies or swords
About her path, so great a danger; yea,
Wise men would rather fear her force too much,
Than good men show compassion. Do your wills:
I am well content to know you wise, and so
To bear what hard or lighter weight ye please:
How sore soever, God knows, I believe
It shall not long afflict me.
Murray. In my mind,
It now shall less distract the general eye
With apprehension of strange times and strife,
To see the ways again made clear, and gates
Not crowded up with guard.
Darnley. Why, so I said.
Ruthven. So I say not. Bear with me though I seem
Less confident or free of heart than men,
Whose minds are gentle as their names, should be
In things of common care: what hurt may come
By fault of us, we know not, but we know
It is no private peril; if we err,
Not we nor ours must only ache for it,
But the whole popular heart of this great land
Must bleed and break for our false friendship shown,
And confident remission of our cause
And very duty toward her, through mere wish
To be called gentle toward her enemies.
Queen. I am her enemy, then: where lies my strength?
What field? what weapon? how shall we make war,
Take truce and break it, with what equal face
Stand brow to brow for battle? By this hand,
I knew not yet how strong it was, nor worth
How many hands of swordsmen; were this true,
I might wax proud to be so terrible,
Seeing in such great men's eyes so great a fear,
And only mine own fearful face therein
As in a mirror shadowed.
Darnley. 'Tis mere truth:
We should be shamed to seem in fear of her.
Yea, made a mockery in men's eyes and mouths
For base and blind misgiving.
Ruthven. You, my lords
And equals with me in the proof of years,
In the age of counsel and experience borne
Of common service done our natural state,
Shall best pass judgment, if in hate or fear
I speak for mine own ends or enmities
To turn your hearts from honor. For the queen,
As she shall be toward God, so I toward her
Would be fast friend and servant; but wherein
She is not friend with heaven nor with the state,
I were no friend to serve her, nor to say
There were no danger and no sin to serve.
Ye must all think I think not to live long;
And being so signed of sickness for my grave
With such a mortal seal, I speak alive

one being dead that speaketh: if ye lose
grace of God here won by your own hands,
power ye have to serve him, and the effect
his good hour, through negligence of will,
pride or pity, ye shall see the state
ık from your hands, and, for one devil cast out,
en entered in its body. Sirs, take heed:
least thing lightly overlooked or done
undo all things wrought. Keep fast your guards;
he king's counsel if they be withdrawn,
n his head that bade them go shall rest
at bloodshed ever follows: yet in time
ık nothing weak that is not with us; each
have some sting or weapon of itself
till sloth feel it sees not.
ueen. A wise rule:
should the wary wolf pen up the lambs,
falcon set good guard upon the wren,
fear of teeth or talons.
urray. We will give
he king's hand the bond for yours to sign:
ntime all ease and reverence shall you have,
freedom for your household folk to serve
est your need may bid them.
ueen. Sirs, farewell.
l not pray you do but what ye will,
ch shall seem wisely to me. — Let me have
d of their instant sentence. [*Aside to* DARNLEY.]
rnley (*aside*). With all speed.
unt DARNLEY, MURRAY, MORTON, *and* RUTHVEN.
ueen. Where are my servants Standen and Traquair?

Arthur Erskine. At hand to serve your highness.
Queen. Ah, to serve!
My highness is brought low, too low to claim
Service of men; if I may find but love
Or only pity of any, this shall be
All utmost service I desire of them.
I have but my sorrows to my subjects left,
And these rebellious; yet I keep what state
And rule I may upon them. Tell those twain
I pray their patience lend me but the time
To hear what I would have them, and to choose
If they will do it for pity.
Arthur Erskine. Think them here,
And your will done already. [*Exit.*
Queen. Yea, my will!
What knowest thou may my will be? By this light,
I feel a heat and hurry of the heart
That burns like joy; my blood is light and quick,
And my breath comes triumphantly as his
That has long labored for a mountainous goal,
And sets fast foot on the utmost cliff of all.
If ere the race be run my spirit be glad,
What when it puts the palm of peril on,
And breathes clear air, and conquers? Nay, I think
The doubt itself and danger are as food
To strengthen and bright wine to quicken me,
And lift my heart up higher than my need,
Though that be high upon me.
Re-enter ERSKINE *with* TRAQUAIR *and* STANDEN.
Now, my friends,
Ye come unlike to courtiers, come to serve
Me most unlike a queen: shall I think yet
I have some poor part in your memories safe,

And you some care of what I was, and thought
How I fare now? Shall I take up my hope,
That was cast down into the pit of death,
To keep the name God gave me, and the seal
That signs me royal, by your loves and faiths
Recrowned and reinstated? Say but no,
Or say but naught, this hope of mine and heart
Are things as dead as yesterday: my cause
Lies in your lips, to comfort or confound,
As ye see reason. Yet, as power is yours,
So let remembrance in you be for light
To see the face of the time by; so let faith,
Let noble pity and love be part of you,
To make you mindful what a cause it is
That ye must put in judgment, and what life
For fame or shame to you through all time born
Ensues upon your sentence; for ye choose
If ye will match my dangers with your faiths,
And help me helpless with your hearts, who lie
By grief and fear made heartless; or lend hand
To make my weakness weaker, and break down
My broken wall of sovereignty; which now
We wot were no sore labor.

Standen. Let him die
As heartless toward the grace of God, who hath
No heart in him to give its blood for yours!

Traquair. So say we all your servants.

Queen. Did I know it?
Methinks I knew, when I bade send for you,
Ye should so say. Ah, friends! I had no fear
But I should find me friends in this fierce world,
Or I had died unfriended. Shall I thank you
For being the true men and the kind ye are,
Or take your service thankless, since I thought
Ye could not else, being young and of your kinds,
But needs must be my help? ye have not hearts
To strike, but at men weaponed; ye would not
Lay hard hand on a woman weak with child,
A sick sad woman that was no man's queen
Of all that stood against her; yet her son,
The unborn thing that pleads again with you
As it could plead not with them, this dumb voice,
This sightless life and sinless, was their king's,
If ever they would let it come to life.
Lo, here their aim was; here the weapons went,
That should have stabbed to death the race of kings,
And cut their stem down to the root; here, here
The pistol's mouth that bruised my breast, the hand
That struck athwart my shoulder, found their mark,
Made here their point to shoot at; in my womb
By them the bud of empire should have died,
That yet by you may live, and yet give thanks
For flower and fruit to them that saved the seed.

Standen. They shall die first.

Traquair. Command us what next way
There is to serve you: though the way were fire,
We would be through it.

Queen. To-night, then, at first watch
I purpose with the man's help — nay, what name

ll his be now? king, husband, or, God help,
g's father? — with the man that you called king
I called husband, to win forth of bonds
the close covered passage underground
t by strange turns and strait blind working ways
ds up into the sovereign cemetery
ose dust is of my fathers; therewithout
t you with horse; and when you see us rise
of the hollow earth among the dead,
eady to receive and bear us thence.
e two hours' haste will speed us to Dunbar,
ere friends lie close, and whence with sudden strength
ust to turn on these good lords again.
this for such poor love's sake as your queen's,
if there be thanks worthy in the world,
n shall she give; not silver, sirs, nor gold,
the coined guerdon that is cast on churls
oin them into service; but a heart,
ot worth love, yet loving, and a faith
will die last of all that dies in me,
last of all remembrances foregone
your names go. God speed you, and farewell.

NE II. — RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF HOLYROOD.

r ARTHUR ERSKINE, TRAQUAIR, *and* STANDEN.

nden. It must be time; the moon is sick and slow
should by this be higher.
thur Erskine. It is your eye
se sight is slow as sickness; for the moon
easonable and full: see where it burns
Between the bare boughs and the broken tombs
Like a white flower whose leaves were fire: the night
Is deep and sharp wherein it hangs, and heaven
Gives not the wind a cloud to carry, nor
Fails one faint star of all that fill their count
To lend our flight its comfort; we shall have
Good time of heaven and earth.
Traquair. How shall the steeds
Be shared among us?
Arthur Erskine. If she keep her mind,
My English gelding best shall bear the queen,
And him the Naples courser. Hark! they come.
Standen. It was a word said of the wind to hear
What earth or death would answer. These dead stones
Are full of hollow noises, though the vault
Give tongue to no man s tootfall: when they come,
It will speak louder. Lo, how straight that star
Stands over where her face must break from earth
As it hath broken! it was not there before,
But ere she rise is risen. I would not give
The third part of this night between us shared
For all the days that happiest men may live,
Though I should die by morning.
Traquair. Till she come,
I cannot choose but with my fears take thought,
Though all be after her sweet manner done
And by her wise direction, what strange ways
And what foul peril with so faint a guard
Must of so tender feet be overpast
Ere she win to us.

Arthur Erskine. All these with laughing lips
Shall she pass through; the strength and spring of soul
That set her on this danger will sustain
Those feet till all her will and way be won.
Her spirit is to her body as a staff,
And her bright fiery heart the traveller's lamp
That makes all shadow clear as its own light.
Enter from the vaults the QUEEN *and* DARNLEY.
Queen. Here come the wind and stars at once on us;
How good is this good air of that full heaven
That drives the fume back of the sepulchres,
And blows the grave away! Have no more fear;
These are no dead men.
Darnley. Nay, I fear no dead;
Nothing I fear, of quick or dead, but God.
Shall I not go before you?
Queen. Not a foot.
See you, my friends, what valiant hearts are here,
My lord's and mine, who hardly have crept forth,
In God's fear only, through the charnel-house,
Among the bones and skulls of ancient kings
That thought not shame to stand for stumbling-stones
In their poor daughter's way, whose heart had failed,
But that his hardier heart held up her feet,
Who even if winds blew did not shrink nor shake
For fear of aught but God. The night is kind,
And these March blasts make merry with the moon
That laughs on our free flight. Where stand your steeds?
Arthur Erskine. Madam, hard by in shadow of the stones;
Please you, this way.
Queen. I will to horse with you.
Darnley. No, but with me.
Queen. It is not my good will.
Ride you alone, and safer. — Friend, your arm.

SCENE III. — MURRAY'S LODGING IN HOLYROOD.

Enter MURRAY, MORTON, *and* RUTHVEN.
Morton. There is no present help: the violent speed
Of these fierce days has run our chances down.
It is found certain she comes back to-day;
Soon as their flight drew bridle at Dunbar,
Yet hot from horse, she sends for Bothwell in,
With all his border thievery, red-foot knaves,
The hardiest hinds of Liddesdale; next him
His new bride's brother, Huntley, more in care
To win the land back than revenge the blood
His father lost for treason; after these
Caithness with Athol, and the queen's chief strengths,
The earl marshal and the archbishop; in few days
Eight thousand swords to wait on that sweet hand
Was worth so little manhood; then Argyle,
Who should have been a sea-wall on our side
Against the foam of all their faction, he,
Struck to the heart with spite and sharp despair
Through proof late made of English faith, — as you,
My lord of Murray, felt it when ye twain
Sought help, and found false heart there, — casts himself
Over upon her side; with him two more
Her last year's rebels, Rothes and Glencairn,

pardon sealed for all that rose with them
o were not of our counsel in this death.
s fare we without help or hope of these,
from the castle here of Edinburgh hot Lord Erskine arms in our offence
mounted guns, making the queen more strong
n had her flight won first its darkling walls,
for a free camp in the general field
up her strength within the fortress here —
ch serves her now for outwork, while behind
whole force raised comes trooping to her hand
his deep strait that our own hands have dug
our own follies channelled, to let in
m on our sails and shipwreck on our hopes,
counsel is that whoso may stand fast
uld here in harbor bide his better day,
we make land who may not: you, my lord,
y James Melville she solicits you,
honorably assure your peace with her,
g speckless in her sight of this man's blood;
that dipped open hand in it must hence,
watch the way of the wind and set of storm
the sea sink again.
thven. Sir, so say I;
serve not us a whit nor change our chance
arrving on our side. Let no man fly
our deed's sake, but we that made our deed
witness for us not to be gainsaid
oe of ours or friend we have on earth.

It was well done; what else was done, and ill,
We must now bear the stroke of, and devise
Some healing mean in season. This is sure,
That faith or friendship shall have no long life
Where friendship is ingraffed on breach of faith;
But shame, despite, division, and distrust
Shall eat the heart out of their amity,
And hate unreconcile their heartless hands
Whom envious hope made fast, or cunning fear.
This cannot be but nigh; and ye that live
Shall see more sure for this blind hour's default,
And hold more fast, and watch more heedfully,
The new chance given, for this chance cast away.
I shall not see it, how near soe'er; and yet
The day that I shall die in banishment
Is not much nigher than must their doom's day be
Whose trust is in the triumph of their hour.
Mine is now hard on end; but yours shall last,
I doubt not, till its service be all done,
And comfort given our people. Take the Lairds
Grange and Pittarrow with you to the queen.
Ye shall find peace and opportunity
With present welcome as for proffered love;
Make swift agreement with her; this shall be
The surest staff that hope may take in hand.
Farewell.
Murray. I would not say it, if ye not knew
My faith departs not with me from your side,
Nor leaves the heart's bond broken of our loves;

But in this trust, though loath, I take farewell,
To give you welcome ere the year be dead.
Ruthven. Me shall you not, nor see my face again,
Who ere the year die must be dead; mine eyes
Shall see the land no more that gave them light,
But fade among strange faces; yet, if aught
I have served her, I should less be loath to leave
This earth God made my mother.
Murray. Then farewell,
As should his heart who fares in such wise forth
To take death's hand in exile. I must fare,
Ill now or well I know not; but I deem
I have as much as you of banishment,
Who bear about me but the thought of yours.

SCENE IV.— HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN *and* SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Queen. Am I come back to be controlled again,
And of men meaner? must I hold my peace
Or set my face to please him? Nay, you see
How much miscounselled is he, strayed how far
From all men's hope and honor, and to me
How strange and thankless, whom in self-despite
You will me yet to foster: I would live
Rather the thrall of any hind on earth.
Melville. I would but have your wisdom hide somewhile
The sharpness of your spirit, whose edge of wrath
There is no man but now sees manifest;
As there is none who knows him that hath cause
To love or honor; yet great pity it is
To see what nobler natural mind he had,
And the first goodness in him so put out
By cursed counsel of his mother's kin,
The bastard Douglas, and such ill friends else
As most are unfriends: but this fire in you
Who chose him, being so young, of your own will,
Against the mind of many, for your lord,
Shall rather burn yourself than purge his mood,
And the open passion of your heart and hate
Hearten in him the hate he bears not you,
But them that part you from him. Twice, you know,—
Or now my tongue were less for love's sake bold,—
Twice hath it pleased your highness charge me speak
When time or need might seem for counsel: then
That thus you charged me, now such need is come,
Forgive that I forget not.
Queen. I might well,
Did you forget, forgive not; but I know
Your love forgot yet never any charge
That faith to me laid on it; though I think
I never bade you counsel me to bear
More than a queen might worthily, nor sought
To be advised against all natural will,
That with mine honor now is joined to speak
And bid me bear no more with him, since both
Take part against my patience. For his hate,
Henceforth shall men more covet it than fear;
My foot is on its head, that even to-day
Shall yield its last poor power of poison up,
And live to no man's danger till it die.
Enter DARNLEY *and* MURRAY.
Welcome, dear brother and my worthy lord,

no shall this day by your own word be clear
all men's eyes that had ill thoughts of you.
other, to-day my lord shall purge himself,
present oath before our councillors,
any part in David's murdered blood,
d stand as honorable in sight of all
nose thought so wronged him as in mine he doth
no ever held him such as they shall now.
Murray. Must he swear this?
Darnley. Who says I shall not swear?
Queen. He has given his faith to swear so much to-day,
d who so shameless or so bold alive dare doubt that?
Murray. Not I: in God's name, no; more than any other.
Darnley. Nay then, well:
m not angry.
Queen. 'Tis the noblest mood
at takes least hold on anger those faint hearts
at hold least fire are fain to show it first;
e man that knows himself most honorable
rs least or doubts if others hold him so;
he that has small honor in himself
quick to doubt what men may deem of him,
d thence most swift in anger as in fear
men's imagined judgments; praised be God,
lord is none such. Is the deed not drawn
at gives into our servant Bothwell's hand
e forfeit lands of Maitland for his own
at by his former fault stand forfeited?
Murray. Is it your purpose he shall have those lands?
Queen. It is my very purpose.
Murray. I grieve at it.
Queen. Grieve or be glad, it stands my purpose yet.
We should be gone to meet our councillors;
My heart thinks long till it shall know my lord
Held of the world as noble as of me.
Darnley. It is not time.
Queen. No, but much more than time.
Come with me, brother
[*Exeunt* QUEEN *and* MURRAY.
Melville. I am sorry for your grace.
Darnley. You must not think I know not all this while
That she doth mock me.
Melville. Nay, her mood may change.
Darnley. Never for me. I had been much better dead
Than cast off thus, who cast mine own friends off
And knew not for whose sake. She hath slain the men
Who kept that night the gates while he was slain;
I would she had rather taken too my blood
Than put my life to shame: yet I may live
To put that off upon her; had I friends,
Shame should go back from me to her, who thinks
To lay it on her wedded lord, and laugh;
As I may one day laugh yet. Hear you news
Of Morton and mine uncle?
Melville. They are fled;
I hear but this, not whither.
Darnley. As they brewed,
So let them drink; the hands were none of mine
That mixed that cup to them; so much I swear,
And may so much with honor. Yet would God
I had not chosen to lose their loves for hers,
And found so cold her favor! Scarce escaped,
Scarce out of bonds, half breathless yet with flight,
No mind was in her of my help, my love,
My hand that brake her prison: for all this,

My kin forsaken, mine own wrongs and griefs
Forgotten, mine own head imperilled, mine
For hers that I delivered, and perchance
To leave within their danger had done well,
No thought or thanks I get of her; and these
That, had I stood by them, might stand by me
When I shall need, may mock me for her fool,
And curse me for their traitor. Yet I think,
Were I once clear of her as now of these,
Please God, to make mine own strength by myself,
Being both ways free; I know not well yet how,
But I will take mine own part yet, or die. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — A STREET.

Enter TWO BURGESSES.

First Burgess. What is this news that flies so in the dark
Like a night-bird whereof we know it is,
But of what wing we know not?

Second Burgess. This that comes
From the exiled lords in England, to make bare
The face of Darnley's falsehood, with what lips
He swore his deed away, and damned himself?
They had no sooner knowledge of such shame,
Than word was sent of him through all the land,
Large witness of his full complicity
And conscience with them of the work to be
For which they groan in barren banishment,
While he crawls here before the scornful queen,
And has betrayed the blood of his allies
To the axe's edge of unjust judgment.

First Burgess. One
By treason of his tongue already slain
Now speaks of him with breathless mouth to God;
And Maitland and two more lie under doom
Through but his witness: yet for all this shame
It seems he has won small guerdon save the shame,
But hath his treason for his treason's fee;
And this more comfort, to behold the man
That by his lips, and nobler hands than his,
Was done to righteous death, and thrust in earth
Before the main door of this Abbey church,
Unearthed again, and nobly re-interred
Hard by the grave's edge of Queen Magdalen,
That men may judge how near he grew alive
To the queen's side yet living; where instead
A worthier stay now in her brother stands
For her false lord to look upon and loathe
No less than David, and much more to fear,
Whom with that David he laid trains to slay
Aforetime, and again made vaunt but now
In the queen's sight to slay him; or so herself
Gave word to the earl, and willed him make demand
Of the king's own false fearful mouth; but he,
Whom thus perchance she sought to make the sword
To pierce her husband, modestly bespake
Before her face this caitiff like a friend,
And was put off with faint excuse; and yet,
Heart-wrung to see him stand, or any man,
Fast in her favor, like one sick with grief

king flies forth to Glasgow, where apart
father's head is hidden; and there as here
sits not in men's sight now royally, with some six or eight goes up and down
n where he lists, and none takes note of him;
le the miscounselled queen, grown high in mind,
ds privy commerce with the brood o' the Pope
ose plots corrupt the northward English air,
with the murderous Irish, to put out
live light of our God from sea to sea
n insurrection of the fires of hell
smoke of slaughter; meantime she reclaims
he English queen, for prisoners to her hand,
death-doomed lords in exile; and men say
find scant countenance of the southern court;
hey think not she will deliver them.
cond Burgess. One is there hath found sure deliverance;
hain of man's can mark him prisoner more,
whence he rests can any banish him;
ven is dead.
rst Burgess. God hath his friend, then, safe;
God's friend he was ever; and hath died
fortunately, seeing not what we live
soon to see.
cond Burgess. He was a nobler man
his own name was noble: no Scot born
true to the old love of his natural land,
stouter-hearted on the gospel side
ll that stood to serve it. Yet have these
valiant servants; Morton, though cast out,
Lives secret yet in England, whence the queen
Dares not, I think, for shame's sake, yield him up
To this queen's bloody judgment, or for fear
And hostile heart she will not. We shall know
Shortly what upshot God will bring of all;
Whate'er this be, there will be none again
That shall do Darnley good.
First Burgess. I saw him swear
That day before the council; he was pale
As one half drunken, stammering as in wrath,
With insolent forehead and irresolute eyes,
Between false fear and shameful hardihood,
With frontless face that lied against itself,
And trembling lips that were not yet abashed
For all their trembling.
Second Burgess. Ay, good cause was there
To shake him to the soul, having cast off
Friendship and faith of good men, yet being still
Signed with their enemies' blood too plain and broad
To gain the good-will of unrighteousness.
When his day comes that men are weary of him,
God shall strike home.
First Burgess. Then should that stroke be swift;
For evil and good alike are weary of him.

SCENE VI. — CASTLE OF ALLOA.

MURRAY *and* DARNLEY.

Darnley. Shall I not see her? but if I see her not
I will be wroken of you that shut me out,
By God I will. What! are ye not combined,

You, my false-blooded brother, demi-prince,
And Bothwell, and the trustless fool Argyle,
With her to unmake me? I shall foil you though,
Yea, were all three made each a triple man
With thrice your heart and wit.
Murray. You strike too high,
And shear but air in sunder: there's none yet
That wills you so much evil as yourself,
Would you but think it. Turn your wrath on me,
It cannot wound or fright out of its peace
A soul that answers not your hate, nor works
By night or light against you.
Darnley. Swear me that,
And if a devil there be, I am rid of you
Whom he will gripe at once, and hale to hell.
You took not word to Melville from my wife,
Of warning with rebuke for his past pains
To reconcile us, and with charge to be
No more familiar with me for her sake;
You were not of her counsel to lie in
At Stirling, whence she fled from sight of me,
Who following hither was again cast off,
And till our child was born in Edinburgh
Might scarce have sight of her, and may not now
When, scarce a month delivered, she comes back
To take by sea and land her pleasure here
Of hunt or sail among the firths and hills
In such fair fellowship as casts out mine.
It was not you that knew this, and approved:
I pray you, swear it.
Murray. You are lesser than a child,
That, being as simple, yet by innocence
Exceeds you naturally. What cause have I
Or power to wrong you? what good thing of yours
Should I desire to strip from you, and wear,
What gold or grace to gird myself withal,
And stand up clad in thievish ornament
To take your place thrust out? Conspiracy
Should have some gain for warrant of itself,
With vantage of some purpose; none lays wait
To slay or steal save what may profit him;
So sit you safe enough.
Darnley. I shall not see her?
Murray. If you will be well counselled, no: her mood
Is hard and keener since your child was born,
And she, new-risen from childbed, hither came
To taste the savor and sweetness of the sea,
I think, with no mind you should follow her;
Nor am myself, howbeit you hold me hers,
And of one counsel to put down your hopes,
More near her favor; one man's eye alone
Sees her face favorable, one only ear
Hears her speak soft; if he be friend of mine,
You know as I know.
Darnley. Why, ye are reconciled;
I have heard what care she had to appease both parts,
When you before her face had braved him, saying,
Ere he reft Maitland's forfeit land and state
Some score as honorable as he should die,
And she had cast herself across your wrath
With reconciling passion; ay, my lord,

'ake note we are not so dull of ear or brain
ut we hear word of you, and understand
'he traitors that ye all are, all, to me,
'he false heart and the lying lips that serve
'he murderous meaning of your will, and hers
'he first and worst. What! will ye have my life?
s it my helpless blood that she would take
'o serve for christening-water to her child,
nd for the font no gift of English gold
'hough bright and hollow and void as English love,
ut the strait coffin, the vile shell of death,
'hat hides and bears me graveward? but I live,
o save myself and to revenge I live,
nd will not die for all you.
Enter the QUEEN *and* BOTHWELL.
Queen. What is this
hat makes such wrathful or such woful war
ven on our ears, and here? We bade you not
ome brawl before us like a groom, and break
ur breath of peace with cries of contumely.
ere is not room enough for rioters' threats
o ring through and return; in Edinburgh
ou have leave to brawl and wail and swear and cry,
eed where you list, and love; here I would rest,
'ith thus much leave yet by your gracious grant,
hat I may somewhile sit apart, and think
'hat man I have to husband.
Darnley. I will go:
would I had not come between your eyes
or now nor ever.

Queen. Then they had never learnt
What makes or makes not man worth looking on.
Darnley. Am I not worth your eye?
Queen. I pray, go back:
I would not say what you are worth or no.
Darnley. I am yet worth two bastards; and this man,
If he shall do me less than right, by heaven,
Shall wear the proof upon him.
Murray. Sir, your words
Are as swords drawn of drunkards' hands, which first
Feel their edge bite; me can they make not shrink,
You they may pierce, and slay your own good name,
If any man be that gives ear to you.
Darnley. You will not fight with me?
Queen. What! in our face?
Hath fear gone after shame?
Murray. Let him pass hence:
He hath said truth once; we shall not fight.
Queen. I charge you
Make straight atonement; else, though shame be dead,
I will find means to raise up fear alive.
Darnley. Nay, I spake hot and hastily: my lord,
You know I bear no bitter heart toward you:
I am more of quick tongue than of evil will.
Murray. Sir, so I hold you.
Darnley. So you do but right.
Nor will I stay to chafe your majesty,
That has all power to bid me to and fro
Who yet was called your lord once of the priest,
And am no lord, but servant. [*Exit.*
Queen. Said you, once?
Not once, but twice, he hath spoken truth to-day.
Yet sits it strange upon his lips.
Murray. I would
He had come not hither, or you not bidden him back.
Queen. What! should he stay? Fair brother, wot you well,

I had rather touch in the dark a serpent's flesh,
And with its body and breath confound mine own,
Than with his breath and body. Never more,
By Mary Virgin, while these limbs are mine
And these my living lips, never will I
Pollute myself with him; by kiss nor touch
Shall ever he defile me. Nay, too, see,
(You have not seen) what privacies he hath
With what strange friends; here have I to my hand
Letters of his to Philip and the Pope,
That they should know I am slacker toward the faith
Than Rome would have me, or Spain; he swears I am cold,
I have cast off care (God wot) to serve the Church,
And he it is, my lord, being strong in faith,
Expounds mine unfaith to them.
Bothwell. Hath he sworn
To sleep for their sakes in a naked grave?
If this were blown among the popular folk,
Scant time there were to sew his shroud, I ween,
Ere earth were shed upon him.
Murray. Ay, but, sir,
They must not know it; it were not well they knew;
Nor shall it be put forth among them.
Bothwell. No!
It shall not?
Murray. By my will it shall not be.
Bothwell. His will! and shall not! Is it queen, or king,
That holds the rod of rule in Scotland here?
Madam, what says your sometime majesty
Of such a kingly will? since, for your own,
It has no power, it shall not fight with his,
Shall not have way, nor shall not be at all,
Except it swim with his will.
Murray. This is naught.
Bothwell. Yea truly, naught shall be this will of yours,—
This potent will that shall not tread us down;
Yea, what you will or will not, all is naught,
Naught as your name, or title to bear rule
Within the realm possessed more royally.
Murray. 'Tis not a score as big-voiced men as this
Shall make me weak with wagging of their tongues,
That I should loose what lies into my hand.
Madam, what faith I bear you and good-will,
If that you know not, let the time and proof,
Not mine own lips, be witness: in this realm
I have some power to serve you, by no craft
Unjustly purchased nor by force of hand
Won masterfully; and for God's love and yours
That which I may I will do to keep fair
In the open eye of all men your good name
And power, which if that name be blown against
With windy whispers of ill-minded folk,
Or such as see your marriage-bed lie cold,
And know not wherefore, dies out of your hand,
And is no more forever. Therefore is it
I would not the worst cause of strife you have
Were opened to the people: for himself,
You know if ever love between us were
Since first I fell under your stroke of wrath
For his sole sake, whose match then made with you
I would betimes have broken, but being made
Would not now see rent shamefully in twain
That men should speak you wrong.

Queen. You are honorable;
ıt yet the whole worst cause you know not of, —
hat even his father Lennox writes me here
etters to put the charge thereof away,
nd clear himself of fellowship therein,
ssuring his own honesty, albeit
is word is worthless with his son my lord,
nd his name held not as a father's name.
his letter will I lay before the lords,
ıat they may see what manner of cause he hath
o plead against us with what likelihood,
hen his own father shall forswear his cause.
ım assured he hath set his lewd light mind, —
ıt of what fear I know not, or what shame, —
o flee forth of the kingdom, and take ship
or the islands westward of that southern cape
here the out-thrust heel of England cleaves the sea;
ıt God knows how to live there, if by spoil
what base mean of life: only thus much
parley with the French ambassador
e hath avowed, and wept to tell of wrongs
ıat, as he swears, have driven him down to this.
Murray. He is a fool, and vile: yet let not him
the more dangerous to you even for this,
ıat he is vile and foolish; there should be
ise means to curb and chain the fool in him
ithout the scandal of the full-mouthed world.
Queen. Such have I sought; and presently I think
have him brought again in Edinburgh
Before the lords in council, even those men
Who stood in arms against him with yourself
When first there grew debate upon our match
(Which I could pray now with too tardy tongue
That God had given you force to break indeed),
And were of counsel with him afterward
In David's bloodshed, and betrayed of him
Into mine hand again for perfect fear,
Fear and false heart; even before these, I say,
Whose threefold memory of him so must knit
Their hearts to his, there shall he plead, and say
If he have aught against me blameworthy,
Or what he would: so shall he be displayed,
And we in the eyes of all men justified
That simply deal with him and honorably,
Not as by cunning or imperious hand,
But plain as with an equal.
Bothwell. By my head,
Your counsel, madam, is more than man's poor wit.
Murray. It may do well: would all were well indeed!
I see no clearer way than this of yours
Nor of more peaceful promise. I will go
To bid my friends together of the lords
Who will be counselled of me, and to show
Your purpose righteous: so I take my leave.
[*Exit.*
Queen. Is not that light red oversea?
Bothwell. Blood-red.
Queen. The wind has fallen: but there the clouds come up·
We shall not sail to-day
Bothwell. No: here will be
No woman's weather.
Queen. Yet I had in mind
Either to sail or drive the deer to-day.
I fear not so much rainfall or sea-drift

That I should care to house and hide my head.
I never loved the windless weather, nor
The dead face of the water in the sun:
I had rather the live wave leapt under me,
And fits of foam struck light on the dark air,
And the sea's kiss were keen upon my lip
And bold as love's and bitter; then my soul
Is a wave too that springs against the light,
And beats and bursts with one great strain of joy
As the sea breaking. You said well; this light
Is like shed blood spilt here by drops and there,
That overflows the red brims of the cloud,
And stains the moving water: yet the waves
Pass, and the spilt light of the broken sun
Rests not upon them but a minute's space;
No longer should a deed, methinks, once done,
Endure upon the life of memory
To stain the days thereafter with remorse,
And mar the better seasons.

Bothwell. So think I.

Queen. If I were man, I would be man like you.

Bothwell. What then?

Queen. And, being so loved as you of me,
I would make use of love, and in good time
Put the scythe to it, and reap; it should not rot
As corn ungarnered, it should bring forth bread
And fruit of life to strengthen me: but, mark,
Who would eat bread must earn bread: would you be king?

Bothwell. Nay, but servant ever to my queen.

Queen. Let us go forth; the evening will be fair.

Scene VII. — Edinburgh: the Parliament-House.

The Queen *seated in state; near her* Du Croc *and* Murray; Darnley *in front, as at his arraignment; on the one side the Lords of the Congregation; on the other those of the Queen's party,* Bothwell, Huntley, Caithness, Athol, *and the* Archbishop *of* St. Andrew's.

Queen. My lords, ye hear by his own word of hand
How fair and loyally our father writes,
To purge his name that had indeed no soil
Of any blame to us-ward; though he have
No power upon our wedded lord his son
To heal his heart's disease of discontent:
Which, for myself, before God's face and yours
I do protest I know not what thing done
Hath in my lord begotten or brought forth,
Nor of what ill he should complain in me.
Nay, here in very faith and humbleness
I turn me to him, and with clasped hands beseech
That he would speak even all his mind of me,
In what thing ever I have given my lord offence,
And if before him I stand blameworthy
Would lay my blame for burden on my head
In this high presence; which to bear shall be
At once for penance and instruction to me,
Who know not yet my lightest fault by name.

Ochiltree. So would we all be certified of you,
Sir, that your cause may stand forth visibly,
And men take cognizance of it who see.

Nor root nor fruit now of your discontent;
We pray you, then, make answer to the queen.
Du Croc. My lord, you have held me for a friend, and laid
A friend's trust on me; for that honor's sake
For which I am bounden to you, give me now
But leave to entreat you in all faith of heart
Dishonor not yourself nor this great queen
By speech or silence with a show of shame;
Let it be seen shame hath no portion here,
But honor only and reconciled remorse
That pours its bitter balm into the wound
Of love somewhile divided from itself,
And makes it whole: I pray you, be it so now.
Queen. An honorable petition, my good lord,
And one that comes reverberate from my heart.
Darnley. I will not stand the question. Are ye set
To bait me like a bondslave? Sirs, I think
There is no worthier man of you than I,
Whom ye would chide and bait and mock: howbeit,
Ye shall not wring out of my smitten lips,
As from a child's ye scourge till he speak truth,
One word I would not; rather being thus used
I will go forth the free man that I came,
No nobler, but as noble. For your grace,
I have stood too near you now to fall behind,
And stand far back with vassal hat plucked off
To bow at bidding; therefore with free soul
For a long time I take farewell and go,
Commending you to God; and if, as seems,
I was or naught or grievous in your eye,
It shall not take offence this many a day
At this that here offends it. So I have done:
Enough said is said well.
Bothwell (*aside to the Queen*). I never saw
Such heart yet in the fool. Madam, speak now;
I wot he hath made a beard or two of them
Nod favorably.
Queen. What should I say? not I.
Bothwell. Speak to the ambassador; bid him take heed
This feather fly not shipward, and be blown
Out of our hand; speak to him.
Queen. Have no such fear.
He will not fly past arm's length; the French lord
Will hold him safe unbidden. Look, they talk.
Bothwell. And yet I would he had spoken not so high.
I did not think but he would bend, and mourn
Like a boy beaten.
Queen. With what sorrow of heart,
My lords, we have heard such strange and harsh reply
To our good words and meaning, none of you
But must be as ourself to know it well.
But since nor kindliness nor humble speech
Nor honest heart of love can so prevail
Against the soul of such inveteracy,
But wilful mind will make itself more hard
Than modesty and womanhood are soft
Or gentleness can speak it fair, we have not
One other tear to weep thereon for shame.
So without answer, yea, no word vouchsafed,
As all ye witness, no complaint, no cause,
No reason shown, but all put off in wrath, —

I would not say, ourself in you, my lords,
Mocked with defiance, — it were but a scorn
To hold our session further. Thus in grief
Will we fare hence, and take of you farewell,
Being southward bounden, as ye know, to hear
At Jedburgh what complaint of wrong there is
Between our own folk and the bordering men,
Whose wardens of the English side have wrought us
Fresh wrong but late; and our good warden here
Shall go before us to prepare our way.

SCENE VIII. — HERMITAGE CASTLE.

The QUEEN *and* BOTHWELL.

Bothwell. I did not think you could have rid so fast.

Queen. There is no love in you to lift your heart,
Nor heart to lift the fleshly weight, and bear
Forward: I struck my love even as a spur
Into the tired side of my horse, and made it
Leap like a flame that eats up all its way
Till I were here.

Bothwell. Why came you not before?

Queen. What! am I now too slow?

Bothwell. Ay, though you rode
Beyond the sun's speed, yea, the race of time
That runs down all men born. Forgive it me
That I was wroth and weary for your love,
Here lying alone, out of your eyes; I could not
But chafe and curse, sending my spirit forth
From this maimed flesh yet halting with its wound
To move about you like a thought, and bring me
Word of your works and ways.

Queen. I could not come.

Bothwell. Was there so much work worthier to be done
Than this, to give love and to take again
Thus? but for my part, of all things in the world
I hold this best, to love you; and I think
God never made your like for man to love.

Queen. You are my soldier; but these silk-soft words
Become your lips as well as mine, when love
Rekindles them; how good it is to have
A man to love you! here is man indeed,
Not fool or boy, to make love's face ashamed,
To abash love's heart, and turn to bitterness
The sweet blood-current in it. O my fair lord!
How fairer is this warrior face, and eyes
With the iron light of battle in them left
As the after-fire of sunset left in heaven
When the sun sinks, than any fool's face made
Of smiles and courtly color! Now I feel
As I were man too, and had part myself
In your great strength; being one with you as I,
How should not I be strong? It is your deed,
By grace of you and influence, sir, it is
That I fear nothing; how should I lift up
Mine eyes to your eyes, O my light o' the war,
And dare be fearful? yours but looked upon,
Though mine were timorous as a dove's affrayed,
For very shame would give them heart, and fire
To meet the eyes of danger. What were I
To have your love, and love you, and yet be

more than women are whose name is fear
d their hearts bloodless, — I, who am part of you,
at have your love for heart's blood? Shall I think
e blood you gave me fighting for my sake
s entered in my veins, and grown in me
fill me with you? O my lord, my king,
ve me! I think you cannot love me yet,
at have done naught nor borne for love of you;
: by the eye's light of all-judging God,
at if I lie shall burn my soul in hell,
ere is not in this fierce world any thing,
rn, agony, stripes, bonds, fears, woes, deep shame,
gdomless ruin, but with open hands,
th joyous bosom open as to love,
a, with soul thankful for its great delight
d life on fire with joy, for this love's sake
ould embrace and take it to my heart.
Bothwell. Why, there should need not this to love you well;
at should you have to bear for me, my queen,
how should I more love you? Nay, sweet, peace,
not your passion break you; your breast burns,
ir very lips taste bitter with your tears.
Queen. It is because — O God that pities us! —
ay not always lie thus, may not kneel,
g round your hands and feet, or with shut eyes
it till your lips be fast upon my face,
l laugh with very love intolerable
I laugh now. Look, now I do not weep,
n not sad nor angered against heaven
t ever he divides us; I am glad
That yet I have mine hour. Sweet, do not speak,
Nor do not kiss me; let mine eyes but rest
In the love's light of yours, and for a space
My heart lie still, late drunken with love's wine,
And feel the fierce fumes lessen and go out
And leave it healed. Oh! I have bled for you
The nearest inward blood that is my life
Drop by drop inly, till my swooning heart
Made my face pale. I should look green and wan
If by heart's sickness and blood-wasting pain
The face be changed indeed; for all these days
Your wound bled in me, and your face far off
Was as a moving fire before mine eyes
That might not come to see you; I was dead,
And yet had breath enough, speech, hearing, sight,
To feel them strange and insupportable.
I know now how men live without a heart.
Does your wound pain you?
Bothwell. What! I have a wound?
Queen. How should one love enough, though she gave all,
Who had your like to love? I pray you tell me,
How did you fight?
Bothwell. Why, what were this to tell?
I caught this reiver, by some chance of God,
That put his death into mine hand, alone,
And charged him; foot to foot we fought some space,
And he fought well; a gallant knave, God wot,
And worth a sword for better soldier's work

Than these thieves' brawls. I would
have given him life
To ride among mine own men here and
serve,
But he would not: so being sore hurt i'
the thigh
I pushed upon him suddenly, and clove
His crown through to the chin.
Queen. I will not have you
Henceforth for warden of these borders,
sir;
We have hands enow for that and heads
to cleave
That but their wives will weep for.
Bothwell. Have no fear.
This hour had healed me of more
grievous wounds:
When it shall please you sign me to
your side,
Think I am with you.
Queen. I must ride — woe's me!
The hour is out. Be not long from
me, love;
And till you come, I swear by your own
head
I will not see the thing that was my
lord,
Though he came in to Jedburgh. I had
thought
To have spoken of him, but my lips
were loath
To mar with harsh intrusion of his
name
The least of all our kisses. Let him
be:
We shall have time. How fair this
castle stands!
These hills are greener, and that sing-
ing stream
Sings sweeter, and the fields are bright-
er faced,
Than I have seen or heard; and these
good walls
That keep the line of kingdom, all my
life
I shall have mind of them to love them
well.
Nay, yet I must to horse.
Bothwell. Ay must you, sweet;
If you will ride thus fifty mile a day,
But for your face you should be man
indeed.
Queen. But for my face?
Bothwell. If you will make me mad —
Queen. I dare not dwell with mad-
men; sir, farewell.
Bothwell. But for your love, and for
its cruelty,
I would have said, you should be man.
Queen. Alas!
But for my love? nay, now you speak
but truth;
For I well knew there was no love in
man.
But we grow idle in this our laboring
time.
When we have wrought through all
the heat o' the day,
We may play then unblamed, and fear
no hand
To push us each from other: now fare-
well.

Scene IX. — The Queen's Lodging at Jedburgh.

The three Maries.

Mary Carmichael. What, will she
die? how says this doctor now?
Mary Seyton. He thinks by chafing
of her bloodless limbs
To quicken the numbed life to sense
again
That is as death now in her veins; but
surely
I think the very spirit and sustenance
That keeps the life up current in the
blood
Hath left her as an empty house, for
death,
Entering, to take and hold it.
Mary Beaton. I say, no;
She will not die of chance or weariness;
This fever caught of riding and hot
haste
Being once burnt out, as else naught
ails her, will not
Leave her strength tainted: she is
manly made,
And good of heart; and even by this
her brain,
We see, begins to settle; she will live.
Mary Carmichael. Pray God she
may, and no time worse than this
Come through her death on us and all
her land

ft lordless for men's swords to carve and share, —
ay God she die not.
Mary Beaton. From my heart, amen!
od knows and you if I would have her die.
Mary Seyton. Would you give up your loving life for hers?
Mary Beaton. I shall not die before her; nor, I think,
ve long when she shall live not.
Mary Seyton. A strange faith:
ho put this confidence in you? or is it t love that so assures you to keep life
hile she shall keep, and lose when she shall lose
r very love's sake?
Mary Beaton. This I cannot tell,
hence I do know it; but that I know it I know,
d by no casual or conjectural proof
t yet by test of reason; but I know it
en as I know I breathe, see, hear, feed, speak,
d am not dead and senseless of the sun
at yet I look on: so assuredly
now I shall not die till she be dead.
ok, she is risen.
ter the QUEEN, *supported by attendants.*
Queen. What word was in your lips? That I must die?
Mary Seyton. Heaven hath not such hard heart.
Queen. I think I shall not, surely, by God's grace;
t no man knows of God when he will bring
s hour upon him. I am sick and weak,
d yet unsure if I be whole of mind.
hink I have been estranged from my right wits
ese some days back; I know not. Prithee tell me,
ve I not slept? I know you, who you are;
u were about me thus in our first days,
hen days and nights were rose-leaves that fell off
Without a wind or taint of chafing air,
But passed with perfume from us, and their death
Had on it still the tender dew of birth.
We were so near the sweet warm wells of life,
We lay and laughed in bosom of the dawn,
And knew not if the noon had heat to burn
Or the evening rain to smite us; being grown tall,
Our heads were raised more near the fires of heaven
And bitter strength of storms; then we were glad,
Ay, glad and good. Is there yet one of you
Keeps in her mind what hovers now in mine, —
That sweet strait span of islanded green ground
Where we played once, and set us flowers that died
Before even our delight in them was dead?
Now we are old, delights are first to die
Before the things that breed them.
Mary Seyton (*aside*). She roams yet.
Mary Beaton. I do remember.
Queen. Yea, I knew it; one day
We wrangled for a rose' sake, and fell out
With tears and words protesting each 'twas she,
She 'twas that set it; and for very wrath
I plucked up my French lilies, and set foot
On their gold heads, because you had chafed me, saying
Those were her flowers who should be queen in France,
And leave you, being no queen, your Scottish rose
With simpler leaves ungilt and innocent
That smelt of homelier air; and I mind well
I rent the rose out of your hand, and cast
Upon the river's running; and a thorn
Pierced through mine own hand, and I wept not then,

But laughed for anger at you, and glad heart
To have made you weep, being worsted. What light things
Come back to the light brain that sickness shakes,
And makes the heaviest thought that it can hold
No heavier than a leaf, or gossamer
That seems to link two leaves a minute, then
A breath unlinks them; so my thoughts are, — nay,
And should not so: it may be I shall die,
And as a fool I would not pass away
With babbling lips unpurged and graceless heart
Unreconciled to mercy. Let me see
That holy lord I bade be not far off
While I lay sick — I have not here his name.
My head is tired, yet have I strength at heart
To say one word shall make me friends with God,
Commending to him in the hour of unripe death
The spirit so rent untimely from its house,
And, ere the natural night lay hold on it,
Darkly divided from the light of life.
Pray him come to me.

Mary Beaton. Is it my lord of Ross,
The queen would see? my lord is at her hand.

Enter the BISHOP OF ROSS.

Queen. Most reverend father, my soul's friend, you see
How little queenlike I sit here at wait
Till God lay hand on me for life or death,
With pain for that gold garland of my head
Men call a crown, and for my body's robe
Am girt with mortal sickness: I would fain,
Before I set my face to look on death,
Mine eyes against his eyes, make straight the way
My soul must travel with this flesh put off
At the dark door; I pray you for God's grace
Give me that holy help that is in you
To lighten my last passage out of sight.
For this world's works, I have done with them this day,
With mine own lips while yet their breath was warm
Commending to my lords the natural charge
Of their born king, and by my brother's mouth
To the English queen the wardship of her heir,
And by the ambassador's of France again
To his good mistress and my brother king
The care of mine unmothered child, who has
No better friends bequeathable than these;
And for this land have I besought them all, —
Who may beseech of no man aught again, —
That here may no man for his faith be wronged
Whose faith is one with mine that all my life
I have kept, and fear not in it now to die.

Bishop of Ross. Madam, what comfort God hath given his priests
To give again, what stay of spirit and strength
May through their mean stablish the souls of men
To live or die unvexed of life or death,
Unwounded of the fear and fang of hell,
Doubt not to have; seeing though no man be good,
But one is good, even God, yet in his eye
The man that keeps faith sealed upon his soul
Shall through the blood-shedding of Christ be clean.
And in this time of cursing and flawed faith

e you kept faith unflawed, and on your head
immediate blessing of the spouse of God.
e no fear therefore but your sins of life,
tains and shadows such as all men take,
is world's passage, from the touch of time,
l fall from off you as a vesture changed,
leave your soul for whiteness as a child's.
een. I would have absolution ere I die,
of what sins I have not strength to say
hardly to remember. I do think
re done God some service, holding fast
, and his Church's fear; and have loved well
name and burden set on me to serve,
ear his part in the eye of this thwart world,
witness of his cross; yet know myself
e but as a servant without grace
of his lord's love's gift; I have sinned in pride,
ance, to be his servant first, and fight,
ce of all men's hate and might, alone,
sitting single-sceptred, and compel
ll its many-mouthed inveteracy
world with bit and bridle like a beast
ght back to serve him, and bowed down to me,
se hand should take and hale it by the mane,
end its head to worship as I bade,
t among his faithful; so I said,
foolishly; for I was high of heart;
now, behold, I am in God's sight and man's
ng; but though I have not so much grace
nd again this people fast to God,
I have held mine own faith fast, and with my lips
Have borne him witness if my heart were whole.
Bishop of Ross. Therefore shall he forget not in your hour,
Nor for his child reject you; and shall make
The weight and color of your sins on earth
More white and light than wool may be or snow.
Queen. Yea, so my trust is of him; though as now
Scarce having in me breath or spirit of speech
I make not long confession, and my words
Through faintness of my flesh lack form; yet, pray you,
Think it but sickness and my body's fault
That comes between me and my will, who fain
Would have your eye look on my naked soul,
And read what writing there should be washed out
With mine own heart's tears, and with God's dear blood,
Who sees me for his penitent; for surely
My sins of wrath and of light-mindedness,
And waste of wanton will and wandering eyes,
Call on me with dumb tongues for penitence;
Which I beseech you let not God reject
For lack of words that I lack strength to say.
For here, as I repent and put from me,
In perfect hope of pardon, all ill thoughts,
So I remit all faults against me done,
Forgive all evil toward me of all men,
Deed or device to hurt me; yea, I would not
There were one heart unreconciled with mine
When mine is cold; I will not take death's hand
With any soil of hate or wrath or wrong

About me, but being friends with this past world
Pass from it in the general peace of love.
Mary Beaton. Here is some message from the world of friends,
Brought to your brother: shall my lord come in?
Queen. What lord? ye have no lord of any man
While I am lady of all you. Who is this?
Message? what message? whence?
Enter MURRAY.
Murray. From Edinburgh
Your husband new alighted in sharp speed
Craves leave of access to your majesty.
Queen. By heaven, I had rather death had leave than he.
What comes he for? to vex me quick or dead
With his lewd eyes and sodden sidelong face
That I may die again with loathing of him?
By God, as God shall look upon my soul,
I will not see him. Bid him away, and keep
Far off as Edinburgh may hold him hence
Among his fellows of the herded swine
That not for need but love he wallows with
To expend his patrimony of breath and blood
In the dear service of dishonoring days.
Murray. Let him but bide the night here.
Queen. Not an hour;
Not while his horse may breathe. I will not see him.
Murray. Nay, for the world's sake, and lest worse be said;
Let him sleep here, and come not in your sight.
Queen. Unless by some mean I be freed of him,
I have no pleasure upon earth to live.
I will put hand to it first myself. My lord,
See how this ill man's coming shakes my soul,
And stains its thoughts with passionate earth again
That were as holy water, white and sweet,
For my rechristening; I could weep with wrath
To find between my very prayer and God
His face thrust like a shameful thought in sleep.
I cannot pray nor fix myself on heaven
But he must loose my hold, break up my trust,
Unbind my settled senses, and pluck down
My builded house of hope. Would he were dead
That puts my soul out of its peace with God!
Comfort me, father; let him not have way;
Keep my soul for me safe, and full of heaven
As it was late.—See that you rid him hence,
I charge you, sir, with morning.
Murray. Yea, I shall;
'Twere best he saw you not.
Queen. I think so. Hark!
Who is there lighted after him? I heard—
Nay, he is sick yet, wounded; yet I heard—
Pray God he be not risen too soon to ride
With his wound's danger for my sickness' sake.
Mary Beaton. It is my lord the warden.
Queen. What! I knew it,—
So soon so far, and with such speed ay, never
Had queen so ill befriended of her own
So fast a friend and loving. I will see him;
I am stronger than I was. Give me your hands;
I can stand upright surely. Come you in,
And help to attire me like a living queen;

ese are as grave-clothes. One go bring me word
w he looks now, — if weak or well indeed,
stout of cheer or tired. Say, for his coming
d care unbidden of me, I thank him not
he have done his own wound hurt thereby.
ill but rest, and see him: bring me in. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X. — CRAIGMILLAR.

e QUEEN, MURRAY, BOTHWELL, AITLAND, HUNTLEY, *and* ARGYLE.

Queen. If it must be, or all without it break,
ım content to have Lord Morton home;
y, all of them ye will, save two I keep
be the food of justice and my wrath,
w hunger-starven; his red hand who set
my child-burdened breast the iron death,
d the uncle of my caitiff; they shall bleed,
Ruthven should, but for death's hastier hand
ıt plucked him up before me: for his son,
him come back too.

Maitland. It is nobly judged,
d shall content the lords and land alike
th such good counsel and such fair consent
see your highness moved to rid yourself
their disease and yours, with all men's will
ged from you by the readiest mean we may.

Queen. Ay, by divorce: I have then your tongues to that, —
ırs, both my friends now that were ill friends once,
handfast here in common faith to me
And equal-hearted; and my brother's voice,
Joined with these good lords present: but you said,
Was it not you said, sir, that by divorce,
Though leave were given of them that might withhold,
And the priest's word that bound unbound us, yet
Some soil might fall from lips of evil will
On our son's birth-name?

Maitland. Yea, from ill men's mouths
And all that hate you such rebuke might fall,
Which were foul shame to suffer and be dumb, -
Though made by your divorce unanswerable.

Queen. In sooth, I thought so; and howbeit yourself,
My lord of Bothwell, by the judgment given
That loosed your mother's from your father's hand
Stood undespoiled in fair inheritance,
It may be where the cast is of a crown,
And such a crown as in contention shakes
Two several-storied kingdoms, even the chance
Should stand not questionable, and friend nor foe
Have word to throw against it.

Maitland. So I said.

Bothwell. Yet must the queen be freed; and for the fear
Lest England for his sake be moved, I know not
What hold it has upon us, who but now
Saw what good heart and loyal will they bear
To the right heirship of your majesty
Who bide on our south border, when their guns
From Berwick hailed you passing hither, and made
The loud-mouthed crags cry to their batteries back,
And tell the sundering Tweed and all green hills,

And all the clamorous concourse of the sea,
The name that had the lordship of both lands
In heritage to bind them fast in one.
There heart and tongue outspake of the true north
That for his caitiff sake should not be moved
Nor alter from its faith though he were cast,
With haltered throat or millstone round his neck,
From a queen's bed into the naked sea.
Maitland. Madam, we are here for service of your grace,
Chief of your council and nobility:
We shall find mean whereby without wrong done
To your son's title, you shall well be quit
Of your ill-minded husband; and albeit
My lord of Murray present here be one
As scrupulous of his faith a Protestant
As is your grace a Papist, he will look
As through his fingers on the work we do,
And say no word, I am well assured, of all
His eye may wink on.
Queen. Nay, I cannot tell;
I would not have mine honor touched, nor buy
My peace with hurt of conscience; being so wise
As silence proves you or as speech proclaims,
Ye shall do well to let this be; perchance
The good ye mean me being untimely done
Might turn to my displeasure, and your hands
Leave me more hurt than holpen.
Murray. You say well;
For none but honorable and lawful ends
Have I desired this council, to procure
Your just and honest freedom, and repeal
The banished Morton, whose advice thereto
Shall not be fruitless; for no further aim
To no strange mean have I put hand.
Farewell. [*Exit.*

Argyle. He will not know of us enough to thwart;
And so not least may serve us; but if here
These hands whose help would hurt you not be set
To such a bond as may put forth our cause,
And bind us to sustain it with one soul,
Shall they more hurt than help you?
Queen. Nay, ye are wise;
I know not; but I think your helpful hands
Could not be set but to my service.
Huntley. Then
Should we set down what reason of resolve
We have to make it manifest and sure
That this young fool and tyrant by our will
Shall bear no rule among us, and thereto
For divers causes shall he be put forth
One way or other, and what man soe'er
Shall take this deed in hand, or do it, all we
Shall as our own and general act of all
Defend and fortify it.
Queen. Must all set hands
To one same bond for warrant?
Bothwell. Who should fail?
Not we that shall devise it, nor Balfour,
My kinsman here and friend.
Queen. Must you sign too?
Bothwell. How must I not? am I not fit to serve
As being or coward or faithless or a fool,
Or all or any? or what misdoubt of yours
Should wash my writing out or blur my name?
What faith a faithful servant of his hands
May freely challenge of the king they serve,
So much I challenge of your majesty.
Queen. Nay, my fair lord, but for your known faith's sake
And constant service the less need it were
To have your hand here on our side; lest men

uld lay the deed but on mine ancient friends,
ose names not all men love yet for my sake,
l call it but our privy plot and hate,
ich is the judgment of all wisest lords
l equal sentence of the general land.
Iaitland. So we that were not counted with your friends
uld bear the whole deed and its danger up,—
whom you have loved not, madam, for the stand
made against the perilous loves and hates
t loosened half your people's love from you.
must we have his hand too.
othwell. Ay, and shall.
ear no gloves when hands are bared to strike.
neen. Be it as you will; I am nothing in your count;
e it; my counsel shall not cumber you.
all ye list.
Iaitland. And all that shall be done
l be the more strength to your majesty,
comfort to your cause: which now we go
h all our help to hearten.
ueen. Go, and thrive.
eunt MAITLAND, HUNTLEY, *and* ARGYLE
uld we had no need of such men's tongues.
othwell. He has the wisest name on all their side;
by the tether that holds fast his faith
lead their lesser wits what way we will.
p-spirited is he surely, deep of soul,
ning and fearless; one that gives, men say,
ll heed or honor to their faiths or fears
breath of holy custom; undistraught
oubt of God's hand paddling in our clay
Or dream of God's eye slanted on our sin;
As one that holds more worthily of God,
— Or would not hold at all — whate'er he be,
Than of a sidelong scrupulous overseer
That pries askance upon our piteous lives
To judge of this and this, how ill or well,
And mark souls white or black with coal or chalk
For crowning or for burning, palms or fires;
One therefore that through all shut ways of life
Lets his soul range, even like the all-winnowing wind,
And ply her craft in all life's businesses
Not like a blind man burdened; sure of hand
And great of counsel, like an under fire
That works in the earth and makes its breach by night,
And leaps a league's length at the first stride forth
Of its free foot, blackening the face of men;
So strong and keen and secret is his soul.
Queen. So he keep trust, I care not if his creed
Be faced or lined with craft and atheism,
His soul be close or open; but what bond
Shall bind him ours so sure that fraud nor force
May serve against us more?
Bothwell. Doubt me not that;
By hilt, not edge, we hold him as a sword
That in our hand shall bend not till we break,
If we would break it when our work is done.
Queen. Have we the strength? I doubt not of this hand,
That holds my heart, if it be strong or no,
More than I doubt of the eyes that light mine eyes,

The lips that my lips breathe by, — O my life,
More than I doubt of mine own bitter love,
More than of death's no power to sunder us,
Of his no force to quench me who am fire, —
Fire for your sake, that would put all these out
To shine and lighten in your sight alone
For warmth and comfort, being to all eyes beside
Or fear or ruin more fleet of foot than fear.
I would I had on breast or hand or brow
In crown or clasp the whole gold wrought of the earth,
In one keen jewel the store of all the sea,
That I might throw down at your hand or foot
Sea, land, and all that in them is of price,
Or in the strong wine of my piercing love
Melt the sole pearl of the earth, and drink dissolved
The cost of all the world's worth.

Bothwell. Yea, my queen?
Have then no fear what man shall deem or do;
For by this fire and light of you I swear, —
That is my sunlight and my fire of day, —
We shall not walk as they that walk by night
Toward our great goal uncertainly, nor swerve
Till we strike foot against it. Kiss me now,
And bid me too speed on my way with them
To bring back all their hands here to the bond
Set fast as mine, or as your heart is fast
Set on his death whose life lies nigh burnt out,
Half brand, half ash already, in the heat
Of that bright wrath which makes as red as flame
Your fearful and sweet splendor; nay, by heaven,
It flushes all the light about your face
With seven-times-kindled color of pure fire,
And burns mine eyes beholding, as your lips
And quick breath burn me kissing. My sweet fear,
Had you not been the sweetest, even to me
You must have been the fearfullest thing alive.

Queen. For love is so, and I am very love,
And no more queen or woman; have no heart,
No head, no spirit or sense at all of life,
Save as of love that lives and that is I,
I that was woman, and bore rule alone
Upon myself; who am all dis-kingdomed now,
Made twice a slave, — mine own soul's thrall, and yours
Who wield the heart that wields me at your will.
I can but do as wills the spirit in me
Which is your spirit's servant. Ah, my lord, —
My one lord every way, my poor heart's blood,
Breath of my lips and eyesight of mine eyes, —
How did I live the life that loved you not?
What were those days wherein I walked apart,
And went my way, and did my will alone,
And thought and wrought without you in the world?
Then I did evil and folly: the more need
I purge me now, and perfect my desire,
Which is to be no more your lover, no,
But even yourself, yea more than body and soul,
One and not twain, one utter life, one fire,
One will, one doom, one deed, one spirit, one God;
For we twain grown and molten each in each

Surely shall be as God is and no man.
Bothwell. God speed us, then, till we grow up to God!
Me first, who first shall clear our way to climb
By carving one weed's earthly coil away
That cumbers our straight growing: pray for me!
will have all their hands to it in an hour.

SCENE XI. — COURTYARD OF A HOSTELRY AT WHITTINGHAM.

BOTHWELL *and* MORTON.

Morton. Fled in pure fear of me? well, he knows best.
Towards Glasgow, said you?
Bothwell. Soon as came the word
You were brought home with welcome of the queen,
He spurs from Stirling with all heat of speed, —
Even from her arms new-reconciled and face
That favorably had received him; leaves the feast
Half made, and his unchristened yeanling there
Not yet signed God's, and dewy from the font
Long waited for, till the English golden gift
Was grown too strait to hold and hallow him, —
Flies from all sight and cheer of festal folk,
And on the way being smitten sick with fear
Pries out of poison working in his flesh
Blue-spotted as with ulcerous pestilence,
Weeps himself dead, and wails himself alive,
Is now he lies, but bedrid; and has lain
This Christmas through, while the queen held her feast
At Drummond Castle.
Morton. Yea, I heard so; and you
At Tullibardine likewise, or men lie,
Kept the feast high beside her. Well, my lord,
Now have you time and room to say for each
What ye would have of me, the queen and you,
Who are hand and tongue at once of her design.
Here am I newly lighted, hot from horse,
But fresh come forth of exile and ill days
To do you service: let me have her hand
For warrant of what dangerous work she will,
And mine is armed to do it; but till I have,
Expect of me, who have seen times strange as this,
Nothing.
Bothwell. I have her warrant in my lips;
By me she speaks you safe in serving her.
Morton. Let that secure yourself: I must have proofs.
Bothwell. You shall have all, and written; but your hand
Must be in this with ours.
Morton. I have cause enough,
Good reason and good will to see it performed,
But will not strike through mine own side at him:
Make your mind sure of that.
Bothwell. Well, you shall have it;
Myself will fetch your warrant from her hand
That from my mouth assures you not; and then —
Morton. Then shall my hand make answer to her own. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII. — CALLANDER.

The QUEEN *and* LADY RERES.

Queen. I do not feel as at past partings: then
My heart was sick and bitter, and mine eye
Saw not beyond the grievous hour at hand;
Now when of all time I should be most sad,

Being parted at love's highest of height from love,
And bound to meet love's poison and my plague,
My life's live curse yet married to my life,
Yet am I light and fuller of sweet hope
Than even sweet memory fills me.
Lady Reres. It is well
When dawn discomforts not the whole sweet night.
Queen. There be stars sure that die not of the day,
Or in this hoariest hour of dusk and dew
How should my heart be warm with last night's fire?
Enter BOTHWELL.
What! risen so soon, my lord?
Bothwell. What! not yet forth?
That was the question laughing on your lips,
And this my plea to kill the question with. [*Kissing her.*
I must ride now. There waits a messenger
From our wed lord in Glasgow.
Queen. Ay? would God
He had slipt his saddle and borne his charge to hell!
Must we part here? I ask but what I know,
Only to have a breath more of your mouth,
A smile more of your eye, turn of your head,
Before you kiss and leave me. Why should love,
That can change life, seat and disseat the soul
In heaven or hurl it hellward, break and build,
Root and unroot the very springs o' the heart,
Have not the force to pluck but twelve hours back,
And twice consume and twice consummate life,
Twice crowned and twice confounded? I would give
All but love's self, all hope and heat of life,
But to have over this scant space again,
Since yesterday saw sunset.
Bothwell. You shall win
A better prayer than this; for one poor hour
Caught from the gripe of all good-grudging time,
An hundred-fold in long-lived happiness,
Secure and scatheless of all change or fear.
Queen. Yet this joy waited on by fear and doubt,
Plucked casually, a flower of accident,
On the rough lip and edge of danger's breach,
How sweeter is it than the rose to smell
We gather from our garden with gloved hand,
And find nor thorn nor perfume! You must go,
And I part hence; yet all through life and death
I shall have mind of this most gracious place,
Poor palace of all pleasure, where I found
Brief harborage in long travel of my life.
Now take farewell of me.
Bothwell. Fair lips, farewell,
And love me till we kiss again and sleep. [*Exit.*
Queen. So may my last sleep kiss me at your lips,
And find me full of you as heaven of light
When my time comes of slumber. — Bid this man
Come in that waits: he shall bear word of me
Before I stand in his lord's sight again.
Enter CRAWFORD.
What message from our lord your master, sir?
Crawford. Madam, with all his heart my lord commends
His heart's excuses to your majesty
For the great grief and doubt wherein it stands
Of your unstanched displeasure; of which fear
He lies soul-sick, and sends that heart by me

crave its pardon of you, and for grace
om your dread lips some comfortable word
at may assure him who now lives in pain
rough the evil news he hears from all winds blown,
all mouths open; whence as one distraught,
d knowing not how to bear himself secure
dare put forth to meet you, for the words
e hears you have said, though fain, I know, to come
d clear himself of aught that you suspect
present inquisition, — this I know,
ough now he laid no charge on me to say, —
e hath writ you word already of his grief,
d finds no answer but of bitter sound,
r any light of pity from your face,
r breath of healing; wherefore on my knees
e kneels before you to require his doom.
Queen. I have no remedy for fear; there grows
herb of help to heal a coward heart.
ars were not rank were faults not rank in him.
Crawford. It is no caitiff doubt that pleads with you,
rootless dread sprung of a craven mood
at bows him down before your highness' foot
take the sovereign sentence of your eye
d bide and bear its judgment given as God's:
e knows, he says, by proof and speech of men
hat cause he has what friends of yours to fear.
Queen. What! must I ride alone to comfort him?
ll him he may sleep sure, then, though I come:
Lord Bothwell is bound back to Edinburgh;
There is no man to affright him in my train
But grooms and lackeys; and, for all I hear,
He never feared my women.
Crawford. Please it you,
My master doth but wish all hearts of men
Were on their faces written with their faith.
Queen. Hath he no more than this, our lord, to say?
Then let him hold his peace; and bear him word
That of our grace we come to cherish him
With not a man's face to procure his dread.
Tell him so much, and bid him keep good heart,
If heart he have, even for my sake, who swear
He shall not long live in this fear of me.

SCENE XIII. — DARNLEY'S LODGING IN GLASGOW.

DARNLEY *on a couch, as sick;* CRAWFORD *in attendance.*

Darnley. She is come in, then?
Crawford. Presently she comes.
Darnley. You found her yet more sharp of eye than tongue?
Crawford. Ay.
Darnley. Would I had but strength to bring myself
Forth of this land where none will pity me, —
No, not the least of all you, though I die.
Who comes with her? what household? I would speak
With Joachim her French fellow there, to know
Why she should come, — you cannot show me, — ay,
And if for good; and if they come with her, —
Her outland folk and Bothwell's, — or, at least,

If she have mind yet to send off or no
Joseph, her dead knave's brother. Are you sure
Himself shall come not? wherefore, being come in,
Should she not lodge beside me? Nay, I hear
More than she wots of, and have spies that see
What counsels breed among the crew of them.
What talk was that of marriage that should be
Between her fiddler and no maid of hers,
To what fair end? Would God I might take ship!
I would make speed for England; there at least
They durst not lay their nets about my life:
Here every wind that blows hath smells of blood.
I am lost and doomed; lost, lost!
Crawford. Have better thoughts.
Take hope to you, and cheer.
Darnley. Ay, ay, much cheer!
Ye are all in one to abuse me, snare and slay,—
Ye are all one heart to hate, one hand to smite;
I have none to love nor do me good, not one,
One in the world's width, of all souls alive.
I am dead and slain already in your hearts.
By God, if ever I stand up strong again,
I will be even with all you. Doth she think
I fear her? there is none that lives I fear.
What said she to you?
Crawford. With her last breath she said
You should no longer live in fear of her.
Darnley. Why, so I do not: nay, nor ever did.
Let her come now, and find I fear her not.
What shall she say?

(*Without.*) Make way there for the queen!

Enter the QUEEN, *attended.*

Queen. How is it with our lord?
Darnley. Ill is it,—ill,
Madam, and no lord but your servant here.
Will you not kiss me?
Queen. Nay, you are sick indeed.
Let me sit here, and give me but your hand.
I have a word with you to speak for love,
And not for chiding.
Darnley. I beseech you, no:
I have no force to bear man's chiding now,
Being sick, and all my sickness is of you,
That look so strange and heavily on me;
Howbeit I could now die, I am made so glad,
For very joy to see you. If I die,
Look, I leave all things to your only will,
And of my pure love make no testament,
Nor lay no charge on any else for love.
Queen. I will rebuke you not but tenderly,
As a right wife and faithful woman. Sir,
What word was that you wrote me, and wherein
And wherefore taxing some for cruelty,
Of what suspicion misconceived and born,
That came forth of your hand to strike my heart?
You that have found no cause, and will not say
You have found or shall find ever cause of fear,
So to misdoubt me,—what could sting you so,
What adder-headed thought or venomous dream,
To make you shoot at this bared breast to you
Suspicion winged and whetted with ill thoughts?

What words were these to write, what doubts to breed,
Of mere mistrust and stark unfriendliness?
Nay, and I know not, God can witness me,
So much as what you doubt or what misdeem,
Or wherein hold me dangerous or my friends,
More than I know what source your sickness hath,
Whereof I would fain think all this is bred
And all ill fears grown but of feverish nights.
What cause most ails you? or what think you on?
Darnley. I think how I am punished, —ay, God knows
I am punished that I made my God of you.
What should I mean of cruelty but yours,
That will not look on my sore penitence
For my least sin, as God would look on all?
Though I confess wherein I have failed indeed,
Yet never in worse kind than was avowed;
And many a man for such revolt as mine
Hath had your pardon: in this kind I have sinned,
Not in such wise as ever I denied,
And am yet young; and though you should cast up
How often being forgiven I have gone back,
And fallen in fresh offence of you that late
Forgave me, may not any twice or thrice
So slip that is none older than I am,
Or slack his promise plighted, yet in the end,
Repenting, by experience be chastised?
If my weak years and grief may get but grace,
I swear I never shall make fault again;
And this is all, and honest, that I crave,
To have again my wife to bed and board,
Which if I may not by consent of you
Out of this bed I never will rise more.
I pray you tell me whereof you resolve,
That I may die or live, who have no thought
But only of you; and at such luckless time
As ever I offend you, even the offence
Grows of yourself; for when I am wronged or wroth
If I for refuge might complain to you
Of any that offends me, I would speak
Into no ear but yours; but being estranged,
What now soe'er I hear, necessity
Binds me to keep it in my breast, and hence
I am moved to try my wit on mine own part
For very anger. Now, being at your foot,
Will you forgive me? that for love indeed
And fear of you have trespassed, being so young,
And had no good man's counsel, and no guard,
No light, no help, no stay, — was yet scarce man,
And have so loved you whom I sinned against.
Queen. Why would you pass in the English ship away?
Darnley. I swear by God I never thought thereon;
I spake but with the men: but though I had,
I might have well ta'en hold on such a thought,
To hear much less things than the least I heard.
Queen. What inquisition was it that you made
To hear such things as fright you?
Darnley. Nay, by heaven,
I have made none; I never sought man out
To speak with any; I swear I see no spies.

Queen. Must I return to your own ear again
The very words were spoken?
Darnley. I did hear
There was a letter brought you to subscribe
By certain of the council, to the intent
I should be cast in prison, and with power
To slay me by your warrant, should I make
Resistance: Highgate said so; I confess
I spake with him; my father that first heard
Brought him to speech of me.
Queen. Spake he so much?
But Walcar, that at Stirling brought me word
Of this man's speeches here, had heard of him
That you with certain of our lords had laid
A plot to take our son, and having crowned
Reign for him king of Scots; whereon the man,
Being had before our council with good speed,
Swore he knew no such tale, and had but heard
Some rumour blown of your imprisonment,
But nothing of your slaying; to which again
His witness summoned gave him straight the lie.
Yet would I not conceive the tale for true,
That, being incensed with some our loyal lords
Who were not of the faction that should lay
Such regency upon you for your son,
You had threatened them aloud with wrath to come.
What say you to it?
Darnley. I say you do me wrong
To speak to me of him that as you say
Belied me to you: who saith so of me lies,
And I will pluck his ears from off his head,
The knave whose tongue so misdelivers me.
And, I beseech you, think he lies that saith
I would be wroth with any man your friend,
Or would not rather give away my life
Than by despite toward such displease you: yet
I have heard strange things here of a trustier tongue.
The Laird — you know him — of Minto, my fast friend,
If any friend be fast on earth to me,
He told me to what bond what hands were set;
Yea, and more hands than those that signed me dead,
He swore, were set to slay me; but God knows
I gave no faith to it, — would not dream or doubt
You could devise, that were my proper flesh,
To do me any evil; nay, I said
It was well seen you would not, by their writ
Against my life that you subscribed not; else,
Could I think once you hungered for my death,
God knows I would not hold you hungering long,
But make mine own throat naked for your knife
As readily as your hand could pluck it forth:
Howbeit the best man of mine enemies else
Should buy me dear — ay, any of all but you,
Except he took me sleeping; as indeed
Were now not hard to take me: had I but
A hand to help my heart, and health to go,
A foot to stand against them, God and you,
Madam, should oversee us and judge; but now
You see what power I have, what hope of help,

What strength to serve my will and my best heart
lies in my broken body; ay, these know that,
What force is left to second my good-will
They know who durst not else devise or do,
Had I the natural might yet of my limbs,
What now — But you, if you have pity of me,
seeing me how faint I am and how sore sick
and cannot eat for weakness, though I faint,
That makes me loathe my meat, — but will you not
feed me and kiss me? surely I could live,
seeing quickened of your hands and piteous lips,
so sweet you are, and strong, and large of life.
Nay, do but kiss me once though I must die,
be it but lest all men say you loved me not.

Queen. I have a pain here takes me in my side —
I pray you — where my sickness left it sore
and liable to swift pains yet: pardon me.

Darnley. 'Tis I you cannot pardon, — I, woe's me,
you cannot love or pardon; but I swear,
so be it you will not leave me, I will go,
so but I may not lose you out of sight,
borne in a litter, such as here I lie,
so weak, so full of sickness, where you will,
be it to Craigmillar, though death went with me,
or to the world's end, going in sight of you.

Queen. Have here my hand, then, and my faith to it, sir,
When there the healing springs have washed you whole
as they shall surely, with cold cleansing streams
Whose medicinal might shall bathe your veins,
And kill the fire that feeds upon their blood,
I will once more dwell with you as your wife,
In all the lovely works and ways of love
And dues of duteous life and unity
That man may claim of woman. Tell me now, —
Ere we go thither, where the leech and I
May help you, nor be far off from my son, —
What are those lords you are wroth at? since I hear
Some are there that you threaten, as in doubt
Their minds are bitter toward you: shall I say
You stand in fear of Maitland?

Darnley. Him? not I, —
I pray you, speak not of him for my sake, —
I stand in fear of no man: I beseech you,
Speak me not of him; I will see no man,
To be our makebate and your tale-bearer;
I have heard too of your brother, how he says
I spake with him at Stirling, where I swear
I came not in his chamber, spake not half
Of all whereof he has rounded in your ear
That I made plaint to him concerning you;
For all my faults are published in your eye,
And I deny not one, and naught put off:
What should it boot me to deny my speech?
But there are they that think the faults they make
Shall to all time lie still unspoken of,
Yet will they speak aloud of small and great,
And tax alike all faults of other folk,

The least fault as the worst, in men like me
That have not craft to hide or most or least.
God save you from such friendship: it is thought,
Through power upon you of such evil tongues,
Yourself have not your power upon yourself,
As by your slight still of my proffered love
I would believe you have not; such a friend
Rode with you hither, — or unfriend as I doubt:
I like her not, — the Lady Reres, your friend;
I pray God she may serve you, if she be,
To your own honor; it runs through all men's mouths,
She was Lord Bothwell's harlot, who stands marked
For a lewd liver above all men alive:
She and her sister both lie side by side
Under the like report of his rank love, —
Foul concord and consent unsisterlike
In such communion as beasts shun for shame.
Nay, for you know it, it lives on common lips,
Cries from all tongues, — you know it; but for my part
I will love all that love you, though they were
But for that love's sake shameful in men's eyes.
Why will you wake not with me this one night,
But so soon leave me, and I sleep so ill?

Queen. Nay, though this night I may not watch with you,
I leave you not till you turn back with me;
But for the lords' sake must it not be known,
That, if you change not purpose ere that time,
When you are whole, we shall be one again;
Lest when they know it, remembering your loud threat
To make them find, if ever we agreed,
What small account they had made of you, and how
You had counselled me to take not some of them
To grace again without assent of yours,
They fall in fear and jealousy, to see
The scene so broken and the play so changed
Without their knowledge, that contrariwise
Was first set up before them.

Darnley. Think you then
They will for that the more esteem of you?
But I am glad at heart you speak of them,
And do believe now you desire indeed
That we should live together in quietness;
For, were it otherwise, to both of us
Might worse fall than we wot of; but I now
Will do whatever you will do, and love
All that you love; and I have trust in you
To draw them in like manner to my love;
Whom since I know they aim not at my life
I will love all alike, and there shall be
No more dissension of your friends and mine.

Queen. It was by fault of you all this fell out
That I must heal. For this time, fare you well;
When I get rest, I will return again.
[*Exit with attendants.*

Darnley. What say you now? she is gentler in mine eyes
Than was your word of her.

Crawford. Ay, sweet to sight,
Exceeding gentle. Wherefore, could one tell,
Should she desire to lead you so in hand
Just to Craigmillar? whence report came late
Of no good counsel toward you or good hope,

xcept the hope be good, there to be healed
f all life's ill forever, once being bathed
ı the cold springs of death; and hence meseems
ore like a prisoner than her wedded lord
re you borne off as in her bonds.
Darnley. By heaven,
think but little less, and fear myself,
ave for the trust indeed I have in her
nd in her promise only; howsoe'er,
will go with her, and put me in her hands,
hough she should cut my throat; and so may God
etween us both be judge. I have been men's fool
hat were but tongues and faces of my friends:
see by mine own sight now, and will stand
n no man's feet but mine. Give me to drink;
will sleep now; my heart is healed of fear.

CENE XIV. — THE QUEEN'S APARTMENT IN THE SAME.

The QUEEN *and* PARIS.

Queen. Here is the letter for your lord to know
bring the man on Monday, as is writ,
ence to Craigmillar. Say too this by mouth, —
ıe Lady Reres can witness with mine oath
would not let him kiss me. Bid our lord,
ine and your lord, inquire of Maitland first
our past purpose for Craigmillar hold,
if the place be shifted, and send word
; me that here await his will by you.
e of good speed; I say not of good trust,
ho know you perfect in his trust and mine.
rewell.
Paris. I am gone with all good haste I may,
And here come back to serve your majesty.
Hath it no further counsel or command
To be my message?
Queen. Tell him, night and day
And fear and hope are grown one thing to me
Save for his sake: and say mine hours and thoughts
Are as one fire devouring grain by grain
This pile of tares and drift of crumbling brands
That shrivels up in the slow breath of time
The part of life that keeps me far from him,
The heap of dusty days that sunder us.
I would I could burn all at once away,
And our lips meet across the mid red flame,
Thence unconsumed, being made of keener fire
Than any burns on earth. Say that mine eyes
Ache with mine heart, and thirst with all my veins,
Requiring him they have not. Say my life
Is but as sleep, and my sleep very life,
That dreams upon him. Say I am passing now
To do that office he would have me do,
Which almost is a traitor's; say, his love
Makes me so far dissemble, that myself
Have horror at it; bid him keep in mind
How, were it not to obey him, I had rather
Be dead before I did it; let him not
Have ill opinion of me for this cause,
Seeing he is alone the occasion of it himself,
Since for mine own particular revenge
I would not do it to him that I most hate;
My heart bleeds at it. Say, he will not come
But on condition I shall cleave to him
Hereafter, and on that word given of mine

Will go where I would have him go: alas!
I never have deceived yet any man,
But I remit me to my master's will
In all things wholly; bid him send me word
What I shall do, and come what may thereof
I shall obey him; if some new subtler way
By medicine may be thought on when I bring
The man here to Craigmillar, that as yet
May not this long time of himself go forth
Out of the house, let him advise himself
How to put this in hand: for all I find,
This man I here endure to play upon
Lives now in great suspicion; yet my word
Hath credit with him, but not far enough
For him to show me any thing; but yet
I shall draw forth of him what thing I will
If my lord bid me be more plain with him;
But I will never take delight to wrong
The trust of any that puts trust in me;
Yet may my lord command me in all things.
And though by checks and hints of that I feared
This man sometimes even touch me to the quick
With words dropt of mine honor and my power
On mine own self, whereby I surely know
That he suspects him of the thing we wot
And of his life, yet as to that last fear
I need but say some three good words to him,
And he rejoices, and is out of doubt.
He was seen never as gay of mood as now
When I make show of grace and gentle heart,
And puts me in remembrance of all things
That may assure my faith he loves me well.
Let not my love suspect me for his sake,
Who take such great joy of his love-making
That I come never where he is but straight
I take the sickness of my sore side here,
I am vexed so with it; wearied might he be,
This poisonous man that gives me all this pain,
When I would speak of things far sweeter; yet
He is marred not overmuch of form or face,
Though he have borne much, and his venomed breath
Hath almost slain me though I sit far off.
He would have had me watch with him, but I
Put off the night; he says he sleeps not sound.
He never spake more humbly nor more well;
And if I had not proven his heart of wax,
And were not mine cut of a diamond
Whereinto no shot ever can make breach
But that which flies forth of mine own love's hand,
I had almost had pity of him; but say
I bid the captain of my fortressed heart
Fear not; the place shall hold unto the death.
And bid my love in recompense thereof
Let not his own be won by that false kind
That will no less strive with him for the same.
I think the twain were trained up in one school,
For he hath ever tear in eye, and makes
Most piteous moan to arouse men's pity, yea,
Humbly salutes them all, even to the least,
To make their hearts soft toward him; and desires

nat with mine own hands I would give
him meat;
it let my lord, where he is, give no
more trust
nan I shall here. Tell him all this;
and say
am in the doing here of a work I
hate
st measure; and should make him
fain to laugh
see me lie so well, or at the least
well dissemble, and tell him truth
'twixt hands.
y, by the flatteries I perforce must
make
d prayers to him to assure himself
of me,
d by complaint made of the men de-
signed,
nave drawn out of him all we list to
know,
t never touched one word of that
your lord
owed me, but only wrought by wiles;
and say
ith two false kinds we are coupled, I
and he,
love; the Devil dissever us, and
God
it us together for the faithfullest pair
at ever he made one: this is my
faith,
vill die in it. Excuse me to my lord,
at I writ ill last night, being ill at
ease,
d when the rest were sleeping was
most glad
write unto him, who might no more,
nor could
ep as they did and as I would de-
sire,
en in my dear love's arms; whom I
pray God
ep from all evil, and send him all
repose.
d being so long my letter hindered
me
write what tidings of myself I would,
no had wrought before for two hours
of the day
on this bracelet I would send to him,
ough it be evil made, for fault of
time,
I have had so little, and I can get no
lock,
Though, that mine hands might end it
yester-eve,
I would not see the man; but this mean
time
I think to make one fairer: let him not
Bring it in sight of any that was here,
For all would know it, seeing it was
wrought for haste
In sight of them; yet might it bring
some harm,
And may be seen if he should chance
be hurt;
Let him send word if he will have
it, and say
If he will have more gold by you, and
when
I shall return, and how far I may speak;
For this man waxes mad to hear of him
Or of my brother; and when I visit
him
His friends come all to be my convoy,
say,
And he desires me come the morn
betimes
And see him rise. This letter that I
send,
Bid my lord burn it, being so dangerous,
With naught in it well said, — for all
my mind
Was on this craft I loathe to think
upon, —
And if it find his hand in Edinburgh,
Let him soon send me word, and that I
doubt
Be not offended, since to doubts of him
I give not o'er-great credit; but say
this,
That seeing to obey him, who is my
dear heart's love,
I spare nor honor, conscience, hazard,
state,
Nor greatness whatsoever, I beseech
him
But that he take it in good part, and
not
As his false brother-in-law interprets,
whom
I pray him give not ear to nor believe
Against the faithfullest lover he ever
had
Or ever shall have; nor cast eye on her

Whose feigned tears should not be esteemed so much
Nor prized so as the true and faithful toils
Which I sustain but to deserve her place:
Whereto that I despite all bonds may climb,
Against my nature I betray them here
That may prevent me from it; God forgive me,
And God give him, my only love, the hap
And welfare which his humble and faithful love
Desires of him; who hopes to be to him
Ere long a thing new-named for recompense
Of all her irksome travails. Tell him this;
Say I could never stint of hand or tongue
To send love to him, and that I kiss his hands,
Ending; and let him think upon his love,
And write to her, and that oft; and read twice through
Mine evil-written letter, and keep in mind
All several sayings writ of the man therein.
Say for delight I have to send to him
I run twice over all the words I send,
And that each word may fasten in his ear
As in his eye, and you may witness me
That hand and tongue and heart were one to send,
Put all my message in your lips again
That here was written. Say — I know not what;
I can say naught but with my silent hands,
Speak with the lips of deeds I do for him.

Paris. Shall I say nothing of Lord Darnley more?

Queen. Say, when I did but speak of Maitland once,
His caitiff flesh quaked in each joint of him,
Each limb and bone shivered; even to the feet
He shook, and his shrunk eyes were stark with fright,
That like a live thing shuddered in his hair,
And raised it ruffling from the roots for dread.
Let him mark that: though coward the man be, and fool,
He has wit and heart enough to know the worst
Of his wrong-doing, and to what manner of man,
Being fool, he did it, and discerning him
Think whether his cause of dread be small or no
For less or more of peril. So to horse,
And lose no word sent of my heart to him.

Scene XV. — Kirk of Field.

Enter Bothwell.

Bothwell. This is the time and here the point of earth
That is to try what fate will make of me.
I hold here in my hand my hand's desire,
The fruit my life has climbed for; day on day
Have I strid over, stretching toward this prize
With all my thews and spirits. I must be glad,
If I could think; yet even my cause of joy
Doth somewhat shake me, that my sense and soul
Seem in their springs confused, even as two streams
Violently mingling: what is here to do
Is less now than the least I yet have done,
Being but the putting once of the mere hand
To the thing done already in device,
Wrought many times out in the working soul.
Yet my heart revels not, nor feel I now
The blood again leap in me for delight

hat in the thought grew riotous and beat high
Vith foretaste of possession unpossessed.
s it that in all alike fruition slacks
he shrunk imagination? in all deeds
he doing undoes the spirit to do, the joy
ickens, the lust is swallowed as of sand?
Vhy, yet the stream should run of my desire
nshrunken, and no deserts drink it up,
eing unfulfilled; no satiate sluggishness
ape with dry lips at the edge of the dry cup
or the poor lees of longing. I am here
ot royal yet, nor redder in the hand
han war has dyed me fighting; the thing done
but for me done, since I hold it so,
ot yet for him that in the doing must bleed;
that stand up to do it, and in my mind
ehold across it mightier days for deeds,
ould not be way-sick yet nor travel-tired,
efore I drink fulfilment as a wine;
nd here must it restore me.
Enter PARIS.
Ha! so soon?
hat news of her?
Paris. The queen commends to you
er best heart in this letter, and would know
ow yet your purpose toward Craigmillar bears,
hether to train him thither by her hand
what choice else.
Bothwell. Say, the device is changed
counsel and consent of whom she wots;
ere must they come; James Balfour and myself
ave waked all night to see things well begun,
or that bond's sake whereto his hand was set
With mine here at Craigmillar; all things now
Stand apt and fit in this his brother's house
To entertain the kingship of its guest;
We have seen to it, Maitland with us.
Paris. I was sent
From the town hither, finding you set forth,
But why, folk wist not.
Bothwell. Carry to my queen
This diamond; say too I would send my heart,
But that she hath already, and no need
To pluck it forth and feel it in her hand.
Bid her be swift as we have been for love,
And the more surety quickens our design:
The rest unsaid shall tarry till she come.

SCENE XVI. — THE QUEEN'S LODGING IN GLASGOW.

The QUEEN *in bed;* LADY RERES *and* PARIS *attending.*

Queen. What was his word at parting? let it kiss
Mine ear again.
Paris. Being horsed, he bade me say,
Madam, he would be fain for love of you
To train a pike all his life-days.
Queen. Please God,
It shall not come to that. Ere this month die
That has not half a week to live, we stand
In Edinburgh together. He will go
Without more word or fear; and being well hence —
How looked my love?
Paris. Madam, as one uplift
To the height of heart and hope, though full of cares,
And keen in resolution.
Queen. I grow strong
To hear of him. Hath he not heart enough
To fill with blood a hundred of our hearts,

Put force and daring, for the fear cast out,
In all our veins made manlike? Prithee, Reres,
Was he thus ever? had he so great heart
In those dead days, such lordliness of eye
To see and smite and burn in masterdom,
Such fire and iron of design and deed
To serve his purpose and sustain his will?
Hath he not grown, since years that knew me not,
In light and might and speed of spirit and stroke
To lay swift hand upon his thought, and turn
Its cloud to flame, its shadow to true shape,
Its emptiness to fulness? If in sooth
He was thus always, he should be by now
Hailed the first head of the earth.

Lady Reres. It cannot be
But in your light he hath waxed, and from your love,
Madam, drawn life and increase; but indeed
His heart seemed ever high and masterful
As of a king unkingdomed, and his eye
As set against the sunrise; such a brow
As craves a crown to do it right, and hand
Made to hold empire swordlike, and a foot
To tread the topless and unfooted hill
Whose light is from the morn of majesty.

Queen. When mine eye first took judgment of his face,
It read him for a king born; and his lips
Touching my hand for homage had as 'twere
Speech without sound in them that bowed my heart
In much more homage to his own. Would God
I could so read now, in that heart I serve,
What thought of me moves in it, hear what word
Now hangs upon those lips; if now his eye
Darken or lighten toward mine unseen face,
Or his ear hearken for my speech unheard.
Why art thou now not with him, and again
Here the same hour to tell me? I would have
More messengers than minutes that divide
Mine eyes from their desire, to bring me word,
With every breath, of every change in him,
If he but rest or rise; nay, might it be,
Of every thought or heart-beat that makes up
His inner hours of life: yet, by mine own,
If he so loved me, should I know them not.
I will rise now, and pass to see how soon
We may set forth to-morrow.

Lady Reres. Can it be
He shall have strength? but let your highness heed
That pretext be not given for knaves to say
You had no care to wait on his good time,
But vexed and harried him, being sick, with haste
And timeless heat of travel.

Queen. Fear not you:
I will make means to bring him in my hand
As a tame hound, and have his thanks and love
For bringing him so wifelike on his way.
It is the last pain I shall take for him,
The last work I shall do for marriage-sake
And wifehood well nigh done with duty now.
I have not much more time to serve my lord,
And strife shall fall between us twain no more.

ENE XVII.— DARNLEY'S CHAMBER IN KIRK OF FIELD.

DARNLEY *and* NELSON.

Darnley. Thou hast the keys? This
house is strange and chill, —
chill as earth: I have slept no
better here.
ose two days that we halted on the
way
ere at Linlithgow, I could see the
haste
at burnt in her to be in Edinburgh,
d here being come she sets me in
this grange,
d till her chamber be made ready
sleeps
Holyrood apart, and here by day
th still by her that face I warned
her from,
at woman's that I spake of, plays
and sings
ere in the garden with none else; by
God,
ke not aught of it. I am sick again,
k-hearted, or my will should be a
sword
sunder them. I would I were away.
ave ill dreams, man.
Nelson. Please your highness —
Darnley. Ay!
majesty gone out of all men's
mouths?
ny state dead before me, even the
name
d of my place, then?
Nelson. There is come from court
d Robert Stuart to see your majesty.
Darnley. Let him come in. Robert?
he was my friend;
hink he held me dear till David
died:
supped with them that night. I
found him once
uick-souled fellow that would quaff
and kiss
glow of woman's or a wine-cup's
mouth,
laugh as mine own lips that loved
the like
now no more this long time. Let
him come.

Enter ROBERT STUART.

My holy lord of Holyrood-house, good
day;
You find a fit man for a ghostly rede.
Robert Stuart. I am glad you have a
jest yet; but I come
On graver foot than jesters run, my
lord.
Darnley. How, graver than your
ghostly name? nay, then
'Tis matter for a grave-side.
Robert Stuart. Sir, it may;
I would be secret with you.
Darnley. What, alone?
Why should we talk alone? what se-
cret? why?
Robert Stuart. I will put off my
sword, and give it your man,
If that will ease you.
Darnley. Ease me? what! by God,
You think I fear you come to kill me?
Tush,
I am not the fool — and were that all,
being thus,
'Faith, you might end me with your
naked hands.
Leave us. [*Exit* NELSON.
What is it? you make me not afraid —
Sir, I fear no man: what, — for God's
sake speak,
I am not moved, — in God's name, let
me have it.
Robert Stuart. I came to do you such
good service, sir,
As none has done you better, nor can
do.
There is an old phrase in men's mouths
of one
That stands between the devil and the
deep sea;
So now stand you; the man that toward
a reef
Drives naked on a thunderstricken
wreck
And helmless, hath not half your cause
of fear;
The wretch that drops plague-eaten
limb from limb
Crumbles to death not half so fast as
you:
The grave expects not the new-shrouded
man
More surely than your corpse now cof-
finless.

Darnley. Who put this in your mouth? what enemy?
How have you heart, or whosoe'er he be,
Albeit ye hate me as the worm of hell
Who never harmed you in my hapless days,
To use me so? I am sick —
Robert Stuart. Ay, sick to death,
If you give ear not to me that am come
In very mercy, seeing I called you friend,
For pity's sake to save you, or at least
To stretch your days out for some brief span more
Of life now death-devoted.
Darnley. What, so soon?
God would not have it done, so young I am, —
What have I done that he should give me up?
So comfortless, — who hath no help of man,
They say, hath God's; God help me! for God knows
There is none living hath less help of man.
Nay, and he must, as I have faith in God,
Hang all my hope upon him. For God's sake,
Whence got you this?
Robert Stuart. No matter.
Darnley. At whose hand —
O me, what hand! who is it shall touch me?
Robert Stuart. Hark!
From beneath is heard the QUEEN'S *voice, singing.*

Qui se fie
A la vie
A vau-l'eau va vers la mort;
Et que l'onde
Ric ou gronde,
Elle entraîne loin du port.

Darnley. She sings I know not what, — a jesting song,
A French court rhyme no graver than a flower,
Fruitless of sense: this is no threat — a toy —

QUEEN (*from beneath, sings*).

Sur l'opale
Du flot pâle
Tremble un peu de jour encor;
Sur la plage
Au naufrage
Le haut vent sonne du cor.

Darnley. What is it she sings now? nay, what boots to hear?
I will not hear; speak to me, — pray you, speak.
QUEEN (*from beneath*).

La mort passe
Comme en chasse,
Et la foudre aboie aux cieux;
L'air frissonne,
La mer tonne,
Le port se dérobe aux yeux.

Plus d'étoile
Que ne voile
L'orage âpre au souffle noir;
Pas de brise
Qui ne brise
Quelque vaisseau sans espoir.

Noire et nue
Sous la nue,
La nef brisée à moitié
Tourne et vire
Où l'attire
La sombre mer sans pitié.

La nuit passe,
Et la chasse
S'est éteinte au fond des cieux;
Mais l'aurore
Pleure encore
Sur les morts qu'ont vus ses yeux.

Ce qui tombe
Dans la tombe
Coule et s'en va sans retour;
Quand sous l'ombre
Plonge et combre
Ou la vie ou bien l'amour.

Robert Stuart. Why do you shake, and hide your eyes? take heart;
Let fear not be more swift to slay than hate.

Darnley. I said, what hand? you
bade me hearken: well,
hat say you now she sings not?
Robert Stuart. I have said.
Darnley. I will not be your baiting-
stock; speak plain:
ience had you word of any plot on
me?
Robert Stuart. If you will heed me,
well; if not, for me
ill take heed yet that it be not ill.
igh how you will my counsel, I am
sure
ny word now lie lightly in your ear
would not lie the heavier for my oath
any proof's assurance. Whence I
had
s word you have of me, I am not
bound
put the knowledge into trust of you
o trust not me in asking.
Darnley. What! I knew
ere was no plot but yours to scare
me, none, —
ur plot to get my favor, stay your-
self
me as on a staff, — affright me sick
th blood-red masks of words and
painted plots,
d so take hold upon me afterward
ving my strength again and state
and power;
worthy friend and timely. — Nay,
but, nay,
eant not so — I am half distraught
— I meant,
now you for my friend indeed and
true:
one thwart word in sickness cast
not off
ur friend that puts his trust in you,
your friend
t was nigh mad a minute, being
sore sick
l weak, and full of pain and fear,
and hath
friend to help and bear with him if
you
l help nor bear not. By my faith
and life,
believe you love me, and in love
ne, and in faith to me: if I believe
not,
God give me death at once and hell to
boot.
I pray you pardon.
Robert Stuart. Sir, your faith and life
Have neither weight enough to poise
an oath
As now they hang in balance. If you
will,
Take to your heart my words; if not,
be sure
It shall not grieve me though you trust
me not,
Who never think to give you counsel
more. [*Exit.*
Darnley. Nay, but one word — how
would you have me fly?
He goes, and mocks me. Would my
hands had strength
To dig his heart out for my dogs to
feed!
He flies, and leaves me weaponless
alone
In the eye of peril, coward and false
heart —
Should not the tongue be false too?
If he came
To affright me only with a fearful face,
Blow but a blast of danger in mine ear,
And make my faith as wax that in his
breath
Might melt and be re-shapen of his
hands —
Nay, I will see the queen, and in her
eye
Read if his tongue spake truth, and
from her lips
Draw forth his witness; if she mean
me ill,
I cannot now but see it. Nelson! —
She hath
No trick to keep her from mine instant
sight,
Knows not his errand to me; and at
once
I take her unawares and catch her soul
Naked, her mind plain to me, good or
ill.

QUEEN (*sings from below*).

Lord Love went maying
Where Time was playing,
In light hands weighing
Light hearts with sad;

Crowned king with peasant,
Pale past with present,
Harsh hours with pleasant,
Good hopes with bad;
Nor dreamed how fleeter
Than Time's swift metre,
O'er all things sweeter
How clothed with power,
The murderess maiden
Mistrust walks laden
With red fruit ruined and dead white flower.

Darnley. What sting is in that song to smite my heart,
And make the blood and breath come short in me?
O God! I know it — his last year's song of death:
They struck it on his lips who struck him through.
Nelson! I will not see her — I will not die —

Enter the QUEEN.

Queen. I heard your call from under, and came in —
What ails you, sir? why stare you thus askance?

Darnley. I had a pang of sickness that passed by
While you were singing.

Queen. Is my brother gone?

Darnley. There was none here — Your brother? what, the earl?
Doth not his wife lie at St. Andrew's sick,
Where he is gone to visit her?

Queen. For love,
Why will you lie to me in jest? you know
Here was my brother Robert.

Darnley. Ay, but now —
I did not say he was not here but now.

Queen. Has he not moved you?

Darnley. Why should I be moved?
I am not lightly shaken of men's breath;
What think you that he came to move me for?

Queen. In faith, I guess not.

Darnley. Nay, though I be weak,
I am no reed yet for him to blow and make
What music of me shall best please his mouth.

Queen. I think you are not, but for all winds blown
Of fears and threats fixed and unshakable.
What said he to you that has moved you not?

Darnley. Nothing.

Queen. What! you were moved then of his words?

Darnley. I say I was not.

Queen. He said nothing, then?
You held discourse but of days foul or fair,
Skies wet or dry, seasons and accidents,
All things and nothing?

Darnley. Would you not know that?

Queen. Even as you list or list not, so would I.

Darnley. What if it please me you should know this not?

Queen. Why, you do wisely, seeing I love you not.

Darnley. I did not say so; I may hold my peace,
Yet not for doubt that irks me of your love.

Queen. Surely you may; good reasons may stand thick
As buds in April, in your judgment's sight,
To cover both your counsels from mine eye
That has no lust to invade your secresies.

Darnley. And if it please me show it, as now it shall,
You will not dread I doubt your love of me.

Queen. I have not heart to dread the doubt I know
You have not heart to harbor of my love.

Darnley. Why, he came here to warn me of my life.

Queen. Your life?

Darnley. Ay, mine; and what now say you to him?

Queen. I say he spake as your good friend and mine.

Darnley. Ay?

Queen. What more kindness could be shown of man

n in your ear to warn me of your life
so stand in peril?
rnley. What! you think
old it me to have me tell it you?
een. It was done gently, brother-like, for fear
word of danger being first heard by me
ld strike too sharp upon my slighter soul,
pierce my woman's sense with such quick pangs
ight dethrone my judgment, shake my wits
minine confusion, and by force
ple my swift thoughts, now maimed with dread,
their defence and office: he did well,
my heart thanks him, showing you first his fear,
are manlike of your mood and mould of mind,
have but for your own life to take thought,
for one dearer; as, I know you well,
ine own heart I know, to have heard of me
ngered would have killed your heart with fear,
in your personal peril beats at ease
blood as perfect as I see you now,
pulse thus changeless, and with cheek thus calm.
d I thank him for it, and twice I thank,
he would serve you, and would scare not me.
e said he was this danger?
rnley. Nay, by God,
would he not say; that I nothing know;
by some hint of shoulder or writhed lip
seemed to shoot at you; and when you sang
de me hearken, and would speak no more.
en. At me! but if such fire be on his tongue,
It should be forked, and set on fire of hell.
At me! but if he be not mad, to you
He shall approve it, instant face to face,
Eye to confronted eye, word against word,
He shall maintain or mark himself for liar,—
With his own fire and iron brand the brow
That burned not to belie me.
Darnley. Sweet, not here:
Would I could fight with him! but being o'erthrown
Of my disease already, to what end
Should he come back now, save to insult on me
Who have no hand to strike at him again
In championship of you?
Queen. He shall come back,
And twice shall oversay the word he said
In your own ear, or else unswear it. What!
Shall I be put to shame of mine own blood,
To mine own lord in mine own love maligned,
Stricken with slanderous fangs of speech, and stabbed
In my heart's core of honor, yet lie still
And bleed to death dumb and dishonorable?
Rather let come the deadliest of my kin,
Mine enemies born, and bind and burn me quick,
Or ever I die thus; rather let all
The false blood of my father in strange veins
Be set on fire against me, and its heat
Consume my fame with my frail flesh, and make
My scaffold of my kingdom; rather fall
My naked head beneath the mortal axe,
And with my blood my name be spilt and shed,
Than this charge come upon me.

Darnley. You are stirred
Beyond all right of reason; be not moved:
You see how I believed him.
Queen. And to see
Is my soul's comfort; but this wound that bleeds
Here in my heart's heart cannot well be stanched
Till by the tongue that smote me, as men say
That by the anointing of the sword that hurt
The wound it made finds comfort, I be healed.
Darnley. Nay, let him come; I will maintain it to him:
Here, to his face, he warned me of my death
Or present danger in you.
Queen. He shall come.
But lie now down, and sleep; I have wearied you.
Darnley. I pray you sing me something then; indeed
I am weary and would forget; but now you sang —
Doth that French song break where you broke it off?
Queen. No, there is more. Sleep, I will sing it you. [*Sings.*

Sur la grève
Rien ne rêve
Aux naufragés de la nuit;
À la trombe,
Gouffre et tombe,
Au flot qui frappe et qui fuit.

Apaisée
Et baisée
Par les brises sans souci,
Brille et vibre
Au jour libre
La belle mer sans merci.

Tant que dure
La nuit dure
Sur la grève où rit la mort,
Sous l'orage
Flotte et nage
Le jour qui lutte et qui sort.

Pas de brume
Que n'allume
L'astre ou l'éclair des amours;
Pas de flamme
Qui dans l'âme
Brûle ou luise tous les jours.

À l'aurore
Tout se dore,
Tout se fane avant la nuit;
Et que l'heure
Chante ou pleure,
Dans une heure tout s'enfuit.

Cœur sans crainte,
Œil sans feinte,
Quand l'amour met voile au vent,
Sur la plage
Sans naufrage
Est-il revenu souvent?

L'ombre emporte
La nef morte,
Et la joie, et le beau jour;
Trop profonde
Était l'onde.
Et trop faible était l'amour.

[*The scene closes.*

Scene XVIII. — Behind Kirk of Field.

Bothwell, Ormiston, Hepburn *of* Bolton, *and* Hay *of* Talla.

Bothwell. If it be done to-morrow, we shall stand
The surer that the queen slept here to-night.
Cousin, bring you my knaves from Holyrood
At nightfall to that hinder gate where-through
We three shall give you passage with your charge
To the strait garden-plat beyond the walls
Whereto the door that opens from beneath
Shall stand unbolted, and you entering spread
Along the blind floor of the nether vault
The train that shall set all these walls on wing.

Ormiston. How said you, that his groom here had the keys?
Bothwell. That under door which lets us down lacks none:
There is no lock to palter with: it needs
But leave the bolt undrawn; and yesterday
By the queen's order was the door removed
At bottom of the stair, to be instead
A cover for his bath-vat; so there stands
But the main door now.
Hepburn. That was well devised:
He sleeps beneath his chamber here to-night?
Bothwell. Ay, to the west.
Hay. She has the stouter heart.
I have trod as deep in the red wash o' the wars
As who walks reddest, yet I could not sleep,
For doubt, with next night's dead man overhead.
Bothwell. We are past the season of divided wills;
Where but one thought is, nothing to be done
Has power to hurt the heart that holds it fast,
Or leave the purpose weaker by a wound
Given it of doubt or after-thought: we have
One thing to do, one eye to see it, one hand
To pluck it from the occasion; what he wills
None but a fool would mix his will to achieve
With pain and fear; the mind once shaped and set
That works, and yet looks back and weeps to do,
Is but half man's; and all a man's hath she.
Hepburn. Yet woman moulded outward, clothed upon
As 'twere with feminine raiment, touched with thoughts
Of female-colored fashion, woman's craft:
She sees and thinks on what could touch not us,
Nor graze in passing even our skirts of sense:
Takes order for the hangings of his bed
Whom we must kill to her hand, lest water soil
The sable velvet from his bath, and bids
Pluck down and save them; such slight things and strange
As take the thought and hold the eye of girls,
Her soul, as full of great things as it is,
As large and fiery, bright and passionate,
Takes no less thought for, and hath heed of these
No less than of high deed and deep desire
Beyond where sight can scale or thought can dive
Of narrower eye and shallower spirit than hers.
Bothwell. Most royal is she, but of soul not all
Uncurbable, nor of all shafts that fly
Scathless, nor of all shots invulnerable;
She had no part else and no power in us,
No part in all that mingling makes up man,
No power upon our earth who are earthlier made;
She has the more might on men's ways of soul
Not being almighty, nor from all man's moods
Divided, but as passion-touched and mixed
With all such moods as men are; nay, not these,
But such as bear the rule of these, and lead
Which way they will — women's; and being so mixed
She is even the more entire, more whole and strong,
Herself and no self other. She nor I
Live now on thoughts and words; the deed it is,

Our deed alone we live by, till being done
It leave us time for life that deals with these.
I will be with you ere night fall again
Within the town-wall; thither get you now,
And doubt not of us.
Ormiston. Doubt not you to find
All ready by the night and need: farewell.
[*Exeunt all but* BOTHWELL.
Bothwell. The time is breathless; earth sees heaven as chill
In the after air declining from high day.
I would the winds would muster, or the sun
Show half an eye-blink of his face that hangs
Now downward to the sea, curbed in with cloud,
And with a brief breath fire the rack that flies.
Why should not flame break over Arthur's Seat
This hour, and all the heaven with burning tongues
Cry from the world's height to the under line
That ends it for us gazing? If the sky
Had speech as it hath fire, or night or day
Voice to declare God's pleasure or his wrath
With their dumb lips of light, from moon or sun
Or the mute mouths of stars, would earth that heard
Take thought and counsel of the cause, to stir
Men's hearts up for our deed's sake here? I am wrought
Out of myself even by this pause and peace
In heaven and earth, that will not know of us
Nor what we compass; in this face of things,
Here in this eye of ever-during life
That changes not in changing, fear and hope,
The life we live, the life we take, alike
Decline and dwindle from the shape they held,
Their import and significance: all seem
Less good and evil, worth less hate and love,
Than we would have them for our high heart's sake.
How shall this day, when all these days are done,
Seem to me standing where it sets my feet?
Nay, whence shall I behold it? or who knows
What crest or chasm, what pit or pinnacle,
Shall feel my foot or gulf my body down,
Bear up or break me falling? Fall or stand,
At least I live not as the beasts that serve,
But with a king's life or man's death at last
Make all my travails perfect; and a queen,
The fairest face I have loved and fiercest heart,
Shines with my star or sets.
Enter PARIS.
What sends she now?
Paris. I came to know if you stand fixed indeed,
Sir, for to-morrow.
Bothwell. For to-morrow, man;
What ails him at to-morrow?
Paris. My dread lord,
Naught ails me but as part of your design;
But I beseech you by your trust of me,
What says this while my lord of Murray?
Bothwell. He!
He will nor help nor hinder — but all's one.
Paris. He is wise.
Bothwell. But is it to tell me he is wise
That you bestow your own wise tongue on me?
Came you to advise me or to show my trust
How cracked a casket I have closed it in

Who trusted in so white a heart as yours?
Paris. I have a message —
Bothwell. Well, the message, then:
And as you are wise, make me not wroth to-day,
Who am but foolish.
Paris. Sir, the queen by me
Wills you to know that from her husband's mouth
She is assured there came here yesterday
To him her brother, Abbot of St. Cross,
To warn him of some danger.
Bothwell. From his mouth!
Had ever mouth such hunger to eat dust?
Well, it shall soon be filled and shut. What else?
Paris. She has taxed hereof her brother —
Bothwell. What, by word?
Paris. No, but by note she let him wist she knew it.
Now he denies again his word aloud —
Bothwell. He does the wiselier; there your tongue struck right;
She has wise men to brethren.
Paris. And desires
To prove it on the accuser's body, being
Once whole again to meet him.
Bothwell. A fair proof:
Doth either sword seek mine for second?
Paris. Nay;
But the queen bade me tell you he should go
To her lord's chamber for his challenge' sake,
And do that thing ye wot of.
Bothwell. Tell the queen
I will speak to him. We must not mar our hand;
Say will I see him before the morrow morn.
Howbeit, it shall be well but for a night
To put our present purpose back, and see
If chance or craft will mend our hand again.
Who strikes most sure strikes deepest. Say I go
To try this brother's edge; if he be sure,
He shall well serve us as a glove to wear
And strike, and have the whiter hands to show.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE XIX. — DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

DARNLEY *and* NELSON.

Darnley. I never had such evil dreams as now.
Save for the terror of them and after pain,
I durst well swear I had not slept to-night.
Nelson. You have slept seven hours.
Darnley. I have been seven years in hell:
Mine eyes are full yet of the flames, my flesh
Feels creep the fire upon it; even my heart
Is as a sere leaf shrunken.
Nelson. Being awake,
Let not it move you.
Darnley. Nay, it shall not move.
Yet were they dreams to shake with waking fear
A sounder state than mine is.
Nelson. Sir, what dreams?
Darnley. No matter what: I'll tell thee yet some part,
That thou may'st know I shrink not for no cause.
I dreamed this bed here was a boat adrift
Wherein one sat with me who played and sang,
Yet of his cittern I could hear no note
Nor in what speech he sang inaudibly,
But watched his working fingers and quick lips
As with a passionate and loathing fear,
And could not speak nor smite him and methought
That this was David; and he knew my heart,
How fain I would have smitten him, and laughed
As 'twere to mock my helpless hands and hate.

So drove we toward a rock whereon one sat
Singing, that all the highest air of heaven
Was kindled into light therewith, and shone
As with a double dawn; stars east and west
Lightened with love to hear her, and the sky
Brake in red bloom as leaf-buds break in spring,
But these bore fires for blossoms: then a while
My heart too kindled, and sprang up and sang,
And made sweet music in me, to keep time
With that swift singing; then as fire drops down
Dropped, and was quenched, and in joy's stead I felt
Fear ache in me like hunger; and I saw
These were not stars, nor overhead was heaven,
But a blind vault more thick and gross than earth,
The nether firmament that roofs in hell;
And those hot lights were of lost souls, and this
The sea of tears and fire below the world
That still must wash and cleanse not of one curse
The fair foul strands with all its wandering brine:
And as we drove I felt the shallop's sides,
Sapped by the burning water, plank from plank
Severing; and fain I would have cried on God,
But that the rank air took me by the throat;
And ever she that sat on the sea-rock
Sang, and about her all the reefs were white
With bones of men whose souls were turned to fire;
And if she were or were not what I thought,
Meseemed we drew not near enough to know;
For ere we came to split upon that reef
The sundering planks opened, and through their breach
Swarmed in the dense surf of the dolorous sea
With hands that plucked and tongues thrust out at us,
And fastened on me flame-like, that my flesh
Was molten as with earthly fire, and dropped
From naked bone and sinew; but mine eyes
The hot surf seared not, nor put out my sense;
For I beheld and heard out of the surge
Voices that shrieked and heads that rose, and knew
Whose all they were, and whence their wrath at me;
For all these cried upon me that mine ears
Rang, and my brain was like as beaten brass,
Vibrating; and the froth of that foul tide
Was as their spittle shot in my full face
That burnt it; and with breast and flanks distent
I strained myself to curse them back, and lacked
Breath; the sore surge throttled my tongueless speech,
Though its weight buoyed my dipping chin, that sank
No lower than where my lips were burnt with brine
And my throat clenched fast of the strangling sea,
Till I swam short with sick strokes, as one might
Whose hands were maimed. Then mine ill spirit of sleep
Shifted, and showed me as a garden walled,
Wherein I stood naked, a shipwrecked man,
Stunned yet and staggered from the sea, and soiled

ith all the weed and scurf of the gross wave
hose breach had cast me broken on that shore;
d one came like a god in woman's flesh,
d took mine eyes with hers, and gave me fruit
red as fire, but full of worms within
at crawled and gendered; and she gave me wine,
t in the cup a toad was; and she said,
t, and I ate, and *Drink*, and I did drink,
d sickened; then came one with spur on heel
d from his horse o'erridden, smeared with dust,
d took my hand to lead me as to rest,
ing bruised yet from the sea-breach; and his hand
as as of molten iron wherein mine
as as a brand in fire; and at his feet
e earth split, and I saw within the gulf
in clear water mine own writhen face,
ten of worms and living; then I woke.
Nelson. It was a foul and formless dream, my lord,
ith no soul in it.
Darnley. Nay, I think it had not.
d I did mind me, waking, how the queen
ng me a song of shipwreck, and strange seas,
d love adrift by night, and fires burnt out
at shine but for a song's length: I did think
was this singing made up half my dream.
r there was talk of storms in it, and stars,
d broken ships, and death that rode in the air:
was there in my dream. What step comes here?
Enter ROBERT STUART.
Robert Stuart. I come to change less than a word with you,
And take my leave for all your rest of life.
Darnley. I will not speak alone with you again:
Stay by me there.
Robert Stuart. Have you not armor on?
You should not sleep with sword ungirt on thigh,
Lest one should fall upon you. For this time
I come indeed to see if you be man,
Or ever knew beyond the naked name
What grace and office should belong to man
Or purpose to his sword. Reply not yet:
I know you are sick, weak, pitiful, half dead,
And with the ingrained infection of your soul
Its bodily house grown rotten; all you will;
You cannot swear yourself that piteous thing
That I will not believe you wretcheder;
No flesh could harbor such a worm alive
As this thing in you taken for a soul,
And 'scape corruption; but if you shall live
To stand again afoot and strike one stroke
For your own hand and head, you shall fight with me
Or wear the lie writ red upon your face
With my hand's buffet, that you spake who said
I had given you note of danger from the queen.
Darnley. Is it a plot, her plot upon me? Sir,
By God, I never said so: what I said
I have heart and sword to uphold against all swords,
And kill you if I might as many times
As you shall iterate on me this for true
Which is most false. When I may stand and go —
Robert Stuart. Yea, then shall we see fighting. But as now
You can but swear you said not this of me?

Darnley. I am not bound to swear it or unswear
At any bidding; but so much I will —
That you may see no hot foul words of yours
Have quenched in me the old thought of fellowship —
As swear again I said but what I might
With honor and clear heart: I spake no word
To bring you in suspicion, or to turn
Thwart eyes upon you of men's jealousies,
Or cast you out of favor with the queen;
I said but you did warn me of my life,
As being my fast friend still, I thanked you for it.
I know not what she says I said, but this
I know: I spake no treason of you. See,
This is a foolish wind of wrath that shakes
And wrecks your faith in me, mine own in you
Being firm and flawless; what you have said, you have said;
And what I have spoken of you was no more
Than I had right to speak, and rest your friend.

Robert Stuart. Will you fight with me to maintain so much?

Darnley. If I might rise, I would put off my state
To stand against you equal; you did say it,
That I was even as one the law damns dead,
And she was parcel of my peril.

Robert Stuart. Ay!
You said so to her?

Darnley. She will not say I did.

Robert Stuart. Plight not your faith to that: I am assured
You said so, and so lied; and this last time
I bind you yet to meet me on this cause,
Or bear the lie about you as a badge.

Darnley. By God, I will grow strong to fight with you.

Robert Stuart. If I shall see your living face again,
It shall be as mine enemy's; foot to foot
And hand to mortal hand we twain will meet,
Or ere the day dawn I shall see you dead.

Darnley. I am like to die, then? and your warlike words
Have so much iron in them, and your heart
Such daring to provoke one well-nigh dead?
I wist your tongue would move more tenderly
If I had now my strength of natural hand
And body to bear arms: but these shall come,
And you change face, and lower your look to see.

Robert Stuart. I will abide my peril: do you the like,
You shall do wisely; should I say farewell,
It were to bid you fare not as they do
Who are of your kind or of your fortune; yet
I bid you, sir, fare better than I think.
[*Exit.*

Darnley. Ay, you think venomously. What hour to-day
Should the queen come?

Nelson. To-night your highness knows
Her man Sebastian weds a maid of hers,
And she makes feast for them in Holyrood
With masque and music; having early supped,
She will be here somewhile with certain lords
To visit you, and so pass back ere night.

Darnley. She shall not make so much, when I am revived,
Of outland folk and fiddlers, who should have
Too much of them by this. I would she had come
To see me turn the lie back on his lips
I did not answer as I might, being whole,
But yet not like a sick man, ha? like one

Whose wit and heart lie sick too with his flesh?

Nelson. Nay, with your natural spirit of speech you spoke,
With the same heart and tongue you have in health.

Darnley. I think I did; I would she had come betimes.

SCENE XX.—THE GARDEN BEHIND KIRK OF FIELD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HAY.

Bothwell. Did I not bid them spare no speed? the devil
think has maimed their feet in my despite,
to keep a knave so piteous out of hell.
By God, it will be moonrise ere they come.

Ormiston. Tush, man! the night is close.

Bothwell. Ay, close and safe
as is the lock of a girl's maidenhood
When the gold key turns in it. They halt like jades;
God plague their laggard limbs with goads of fire!
Must they fall spavined now?

Hay. Here come they three,
and with charged hands; be not so outward hot,
lit as their charge is ere we give it fire.

Bothwell. Teach your own tongue to take your tune, not mine.

Enter HEPBURN *with Servants.*

Have you some devil's cramp in your bones, to crawl
at this worm's race? Set down your load, and go.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

What lamed these knaves' feet or belated you,
to hold us here thus till the moon were up?

Hepburn. 'Tis not yet risen; and your own word it was
withheld us till the west should cast off red.

Bothwell. Well, we have time. Ye three are hands enough
To bear this down, and strew it within the vault,
While I go help the queen here bide her hour
Till you send Paris to me for a sign.
Take heed there be no noise. Let but two stay
To fire the train; you, cousin, for my love
Shall be one hand thereto. Pass in, and see
Ye go down sure and softly. From this gate
Ye know the passage under; go, and speed.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XXI.—DARNLEY'S CHAMBER.

The QUEEN, DARNLEY, *Earls of* CASSILIS, HUNTLEY, *and* ARGYLE.

Queen. But I must chide you for one thing, my lord,
That you would hold your servant Duram here
Though it be for love you bear him; he is sick,
And should not sleep nor watch with you to-night.
You do not well to keep him from the town
Against his health, who should take physic there,
And come back whole to serve you.

Darnley. Let him go.
I did but bid him leave me not alone;
I will have one for service at my hand.

Queen. Have you no more but just this young man gone
Whom I bade go even where was best for him?
Let your page lie at hand here.

Darnley. Nay, I will.
You sent off Alexander?

Queen. He was sick;
We should show care of them we take to grace
More friendlike than by cherishing ourselves
With their forced company; the grace is more
To take thought for them whom we hold in trust

Than still to exact their service, tax their faith,
Whose faith and service we that lean thereon
Should put to no more toil and pain than needs,
Requiting love with labor.
Darnley. You say well:
But what should ail him? save that yesterday
He found his bed-straw here by chance afire,
And flung it out at window; on which plea
He would not lie to-night here, till I bade him
Sleep with me as aforetime, being of all
The man bound closest to my love and trust;
Then first he spake of sickness, as you heard
Who sat between us. Nay, but let him go;
The boy shall serve to sleep here.
Queen. Sickness makes
All wills to serve it like necessity:
Witness my will to keep my brother here
Whom his wife's sickness at St. Andrew's now
Parts from our feasts and counsels, caught up hence
As if a wind had rapt him.
Darnley. She is sick too,—
The lady Murray?
Queen. Nigh to death, he says;
I know not: who knows how near death he walks
Who treads as now most upright in the sun?
Argyle. Why have we death and sickness in our mouths,
Who come forth of a feast not ended yet
That in good time recalls us?
Queen. Presently.
I would you were in health to dance me down
To-night but for the bride's sake; for the groom,
He may live easier that you grace him not,
Nor gall with favor or with jealousy.
Darnley. We twain shall see this night out otherwise.
Queen. I am sure you shall see more of rest than I.
Darnley. Except I watch for sickness' sake all night.
Queen. That shall you not; I charge you on my love
Sleep sound for my sake.
Enter BOTHWELL.
Are not you the bell
That strikes the hour to sunder us, my lord?
Bothwell. Madam, I strike not yet.
Queen. The better: sit,
And make no sound of parting till your hour,
No timeless note of severance. My fair lord,
Have you no fair word for your noble guests?
Darnley. I pray you, sirs, of your own gentleness,
Lay it not to my discourtesy for shame
That I can but thus sickly entertain
The grace ye do me; that I meet it so,
Impute not to my will that is myself,
But to my weakness that is none of me
Save as our enemy may be part of us,
And so forgive it.
Huntley. Sir, we are fain to see,
Even in your gracious words that speak you ill,
Some spirit of health already.
Cassilis. I would pledge
My name and word you shall not long lie sick,
Who bear yourself thus lordlike.
[*Noise below.*
Queen. Ah! my heart—
It wrings me here in passing; pardon me.
Bothwell. God's lightning burn them! will they mar me now?
[*Aside, and exit.*
Darnley. Heard you no noise?
Argyle. Where?
Queen. Some one stirred below;
A chair thrown down or such-like.
Darnley. Nay, I caught
A rush and rattle as—
Cassilis. Of pebble-stones?

Darnley. Where is my lord gone forth?
Queen. Why are you moved?
Darnley. I am not moved: I am no fearful fool
To shake and whiten as a winter tree
With no more wind than this is.
Queen. Do you think
It is your counsellor come back in wrath
To warn again and threaten?
Darnley. Nay, for him
I think he hath learnt a lesson of my rede
To vex his soul and trouble me no more.
Re-enter BOTHWELL.
Queen. What deadly news now of what danger, sir?
Bothwell. Some fellow bearing fagots for the fire
Slipt at the threshold: I have admonished him
What din his knaveship made even in our ears
As if he had the devil there in his hands.
Queen (*aside*). It was of them?
Bothwell (*aside*). Ay, hell take hold on them!
It was their din, God thank them for it with fire,
Our careful helpers; but I have made them safe:
The train is well-nigh laid now: what remains
To strew, I have charged them shed without more sound
Than where the snow strikes.
Darnley. Must you part indeed?
Queen. They look for us ere long.
Darnley. Now know I not
What I would give to hold you here a night:
Even half my life, I think, and know not why.
Queen. That were too much. I slept here yesterday;
Were you the better for me?
Darnley. Ay, and no;
deemed I was the better till I slept,
And then —
Queen. Why, did my being here break your sleep?
It shall not break to-night then.
Enter PARIS, *and stands at the door.*
Bothwell (*aside to* ARGYLE). Time is come;
Touch him, and give the sign.
Darnley. The air turns sharp;
There came a wind as chill as from the pit.
Why do you fix your eyes so fast on me?
Queen. Not out of mind to mar your sleep again.
Darnley. I will not sleep alone.
Queen. Ay, will you not?
The town looks like a smoke whose flame is out,
Deformed of night, defaced and featureless,
Dull as the dead fume of a fallen fire.
There starts out of the cloud a climbing star,
And there is caught and slain.
Darnley. Why gaze you so?
Queen. I looked to see if there should rise again
Out of its timeless grave the mounting light
That so was overtaken. We must part;
Keep with this kiss this ring again for me
Till I shall ask it of you; and good night.
Darnley. A good night it may be to folk that feast;
I see not how it shall be good to me.
Queen. It may be better. I must be some hour
Again among the masquers: you that sleep
Shall hear no noise and see no company.
Enter NELSON.
For this one night here comes your chamberlain:
Good rest with you. 'Twas just this time last year
David was slain.
Darnley. Why tell you me of that?
Queen. This very time as now. Good night, my lord.
[*Exeunt all but* DARNLEY *and* NELSON.
Darnley. What folk remain by me?
Nelson. Sir, four of us:

Myself and Seymour, Taylor and his boy.
Darnley. Let Taylor sleep here in my room to-night,
You three in the south gallery.
Nelson. Well, my lord.
Darnley. I am left here very lonely. She was kind,
Most kind she was; but what should make her speak
Of David's slaying?
Nelson. A word that shot by chance;
A shaft of thought that grazed her and flew by.
Darnley. Why should she tell me of it? My heart runs low;
As if my blood beat out of tune with life,
I feel the veins shuddering shrink in, and all
My body seems a burden to my soul.
Come, I will think not that way.
Re-enter PARIS.
Paris. Sir, the queen,
Having forgot for haste in parting hence
Her outer cloak of fur, hath sent me for it,
Lest this night's weather strike her blood a-cold.
Darnley. Take it, and go.
[*Exit* PARIS.
I do not like their eyes,
These foreign folk's that serve her. Is it cold?
I feel cold here.
Nelson. A fair sharp night, my lord;
And the air less cumbered than it was with cloud.
Darnley. I find no night of all nights fair to me:
I am sick here at my heart all the dark hours.
Give me the book there. Ay, my book of psalms?
What day is this?
Nelson. The ninth of February.
Darnley. How says it of God's foes, they were afraid
Where no fear was? That am not I: my fear
Dies without food. I am not as were these.
I prithee tell me, of thine honest heart,
Think'st thou I have no cause to feed my fear,
Or keep the bitter life in it alive?
Nelson. I know not, sir; but what you give it of food
Is so much taken from your health of heart
That goes to starve your spirit of likely life.
Darnley. Why, then I will not feed it with false thoughts.
Call here my chamber-fellow. If the heart
Enter TAYLOR.
Be but the servant of chance cold and heat,
And the brain bear not rule upon the blood,
We are beasts who call us men. Thomas, good night.
[*Exit* NELSON.
What, shall we watch a while?
Taylor. So please your grace.
Darnley. I have more mind to sleep than power to sleep:
Some unrest in me fights against my rest.
Come hither, Will. Of all thy fellows here,
I think thou lov'st me; fain am I to think.
I would not live unloved of all men born;
I hope I shall not. Dost thou feel to-night
Thy living blood and spirit at ease in thee?
Taylor. Surely, my lord.
Darnley. I would thy lord did too.
This is a bitter writing where he saith
How in his prayer he mourns, and hath his heart
Disquieted within him; and again,
The fear of death is fallen upon him, see,
And fearfulness and trembling, as is writ,
Are come upon him, and an horrible dread
Hath him o'erwhelmed: Oh that I had, saith he,
Wings like a dove! then would I flee away,

ıd be at rest; would get me then far
off,
ıd bide within the wilderness, it
saith;
vould make haste to escape. Lo, here
am I,
ıat bide as in a wilderness indeed,
ıd have not wings to bear me forth
of fear.
or is it an open enemy, he saith,
ath done me this dishonor (what hath
put
ıis deadly scripture in mine eye to-
night?)
or then I could have borne it; but it
was
ren thou, mine own familiar friend,
with whom
took sweet counsel; in the house of
God
e walked as friends. Ay, in God's
house it was
ıat we joined hands, even she my wife
and I,
ho took but now sweet counsel mouth
to mouth,
ıd kissed as friends together.
Wouldst thou think,
e set this ring at parting on my
hand
ıd to my lips her lips? and then she
spake
ords of that last year's slaughter. O
God, God!
now not if it be not of thy will
heart begins to pass into her
heart,
ne eye to read within her eye, and
find
erein a deadlier scripture. Must it
be
at I so late should waken, and so
young
e? for I wake as out of sleep to
death.
there no hand or heart on earth to
help?
ther! my mother! hast thou heart
nor hand
save thy son, to take me hence
away
r off, and hide me? But I was thy
son,
That lay between thy breasts and drank
of thee,
And I thy son it is they seek to slay.
My God, my God! how shall they mur-
der me?
Taylor. I pray you, comfort your own
heart, my lord:
Your passion drives your manhood out
of you.
Darnley. I know it doth: I am hare-
hearted, for
The hunters are upon me. There —
and there —
I hear them questing. I shall die, man,
— die,
And never see the sun more; ay, this
hour
Will they come in and slay me. O
great God,
Sweet Jesus! will you have me die this
death,
Such death as never man before has
died?
See how they will not let me pray to
you,
To take my soul out of their fangs and
hell!
Will you not make the sun rise for my
sake,
That I may see you in the dawn, and
live,
And know the grace that God hath ere
I die?
Taylor. Sir, for God's love —
Darnley. I say I hear their feet.
Thou hast no ears — God hath no ears
for me,
Nor eyes to look upon me; hands he
hath, —
Their bloody hands to smite with, and
her heart
Is his toward me to slay me. Let them
come.
How do men die? but I so trapped
alive, —
Oh, I shall die a dog's death and no
man's.
Mary, by Christ whose mother's was
your name,
Slay me not! God, turn off from me
that heart, —
Out of her hands, God, God, deliver
me!

ACT III.—JANE GORDON.

Time: from February 10 to June 11, 1567.

SCENE I.—BOTHWELL'S APARTMENT IN HOLYROOD.

BOTHWELL, ORMISTON, HEPBURN OF BOLTON, *and other Gentlemen.*

Bothwell. Is my knave sent for to me from the queen?

Hepburn. Ay, my good lord.

Bothwell. I had happier thoughts of him,
Who served us but unhappily last night:
This Paris had been faithful, and his tongue,
That might have struck a sting into my fame,
Had done me loyal service, and let fly
No word to bring me in disgrace of men
When I stood friendless; for which cause ye know
I gave him place with the queen's chamberlains
And promise of more furtherance; but this thing
Has turned his six years' service into dust,
And made his faith as running water slip
Between my hands that held it for a staff;
For, since I first brake with him of the deed,
He hath been for fear besotted like a beast.

Ormiston. 'Faith, he was heavy enough of cheer last night
When you came forth, and the queen parted thence
And hither to the bridal.

Bothwell. By this hand,
I came upon him glooming and withdrawn
Up in a nook with face as of one hanged,
And asked what ailed him to put on that gloom
Or make such countenance there before the queen?
And I would handle him in such sort, I said,
As he was never in his life,—by God,
I had the mind to do it,—and he, *My lord,*
I care not what thing now ye do to me,
And craved he might get thence to bed, as sick,
But that I would not: then, as ye twain saw,
When came the wind and thunder of the blast
That blew the fool forth who took wing for death,
Down my knave drops me flatlong, with his hair
Aghast as hedgehogs' prickles, and, *Alas,*
My lord! what thing is this? and *He had seen*
Great enterprises, marry, *and many of them,*
But never one that scared him so as this;
And such a thing would never have good end,
And I should see it. By God, I had a will
To have set my dagger here into him, but yet
I drew it not forth.

Ormiston. I doubt you did not well:
'Tis of such stuff that time makes tale-bearers.

Bothwell. I would not strike him for old service' sake,
Were he more dangerous to me; but, God help,
What hurt here can he do us? I tell you, sirs,
I think my star that was not swift to rise,
But hung this long time strangled in dead cloud,
Is even by this a fire in heaven, and hath
The heat and light in it of this dead man's
That it hath drunk up as a dewdrop drawn
Into the red mid-heat of its own heart;
And ye that walk by light of it shall stand

ith morning on the footless mountain-tops
rowned.
Hepburn. There are crags yet slippery to be clomb,
nd scaurs to rend their knees and feet who rise.
Bothwell. I have my hand here on the throat of time,
nd hold mine hour of fortune by the hair.
ad I let slip this season, I had fallen aked and sheer to break myself on death,
cragsman crushed at the cliff's foot; but now
iance cannot trip me, if I look not down
nd let mine eye swim back among slain fears
reckon up dead dangers; but I look
igh up as is the light, higher than your eyes,
yond all eagles' aeries, to the sun.
Ormiston. You will be king?
Bothwell. Was I not crowned last night?
e hand that gave those dead stones wings to fly
ve wings too to my fortune, and the fire
at sprang then in our faces, on my head
as as the gold forefigured on a king's.
Enter PARIS.
hat says the queen? why shak'st thou like a cur?
eak, beast, or beastlike shalt thou fare with me:
is thou not seen her?
Paris. Ay, my lord.
Bothwell. Ay, dog?
hat said she to those gaping eyes of thine?
Paris. My lord, I found her in her mourning bed
w-hung with black; her looks were fresh and staid:
r fast being broken only with an egg,
e she addressed herself again to sleep
She spake but three words with me of yourself,
How might you fare, and when she rose by noon
You should come to her: no more.
Bothwell. So let her sleep;
There are that watch for her. For thine own part,
I charge thee, tell me one thing: in thy life
Didst thou pledge ever promise, or plight faith,
To that dead mask of kingship?
Paris. Nay, my lord.
Bothwell. Seest thou not now these gentlemen my friends?
Not one of them but for troth's sake to me
And loving service hath cast all things off
To do as I shall and to fare as I;
And if thou think'st, whom no faith bound nor love
To serve that fool, or come 'twixt hell and him
To buckler him from burning, — if thou think'st,
That art my servant, thou hast sinned toward God
In our offence, this lies not to thy charge,
But mine who caused thee do it, and all the lords'
Who with me took this work in all their hands.
And if now thou have will to go thy way,
Thou shalt depart right soon with recompense;
But for all pains that can be put to thee
Thou must not take this on thy tongue again.
Paris. My lord, I will not.
Bothwell. Sirs, with me it rests
To take some order for the burial soon.
When the queen's eye hath dwelt upon him dead, —
As shall be, lest men say for shame or fear
She would not see him, — then with all privy speed
He shall by night be given here to the worms.

His raiment and his horses will I take
By the queen's gift; for, being now highest in place,
I will present me kinglike to the time,
And come before men royal, who shall know
I stand here where he stood in all their sight;
So, seeing at once if I be lord or no,
He that shall hate me risen shall need take heart
To strike betimes, or strike not. At this hour
Bold heart, swift hand, are wiser than wise brain.
I must be seen of all men's fear or hate,
And as I am seen must see them, and smite down,
Or lie forever naked underfoot
Down in the dark for them to triumph on.
That will I not; but who shall overthrow
Must kill me kingly, sworded hand to hand,
Not snared with gin or lime-twig as a fool,
Nor hurled by night up howling into heaven,
But in the sun's eye weaponed. Some of you
Go forth, and find what noise is in the streets,
What rumors, and how tempered, on men's tongues:
When I pass out among them, I will take
Some fifty with me to my guard, and ride
As might their king ride. Be it proclaimed abroad,
In mine own name and Maitland's and Argyle's,
Two thousand pounds shall pay that good man's pains
Who shall produce the murderers of our king
For just and sudden judgment. In few days,
If Mar be not mine unfriend and his own,
Who holds the keys of Stirling, we shall pass
With some of counsel thither, and there bide
Till the first reek of rumor have blown by,
Then call in spring our parliament again.

Hepburn. Your heart of hope is great: with God to friend,
A man could speed no better than your hope.

Bothwell. I tell thee, God is in that man's right hand
Whose heart knows when to strike and when to stay.
I swear I would not ask more hope of heaven
Than of mine own heart which puts fire to me,
And of mine own eye which discerns my day.
And, seeing the hope wherein I go now forth
Is of their giving, if I live or die,
With God to friend or unfriend, quick or dead
I shall not wake nor sleep with them that fear,
Whose lives are as leaves wavering in a wind,
But as a man foiled or a man enthroned
That was not fooled of fortune nor of fear. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — ANOTHER ROOM IN THE SAME.

The body of DARNLEY *lying on a bier. Two men in attendance.*

First Attendant. There is no wound.

Second Attendant. Nor hath the fire caught here;
This gown about him is not singed; his face
Is clinched together, but on hair nor cheek
Has flame laid even a finger; each limb whole,
And nothing of him shattered but the life.
How comes he dead?

First Attendant. Tush, tush! he died by chance.

ke thou no pain to know it. For
mine own mind,
hink it was his sickness which being
full
oke as a plague-spot breaks, and
shattered him,
d, with his fleshly house, the house
of stone
hich held him dying: his malady it
was
at burst the walls in sunder, and sent
up
uin of flaming roofs and floors afire.
econd Attendant. Was not his cham-
ber-fellow's corpse as his?
First Attendant. Ay, woundless as
they say, and unconsumed;
now not surely. But the blast that
made
e good town ring and rock here
through her streets
ook not all sleepers in the house to
death:
ree souls have crept forth of the
wreck alive
at slept without his chamber.
econd Attendant. What say these?
irst Attendant. What should they
say, with thanks for their own
hap,
that this chance is dire, and this
man dead?
ere is no more yet for sage lips to
say,
at would not timeless be stopped up
with earth.
Enter the QUEEN *and* BOTHWELL.
ueen. Leave us, and after take your
charge again.
irst Attendant. We must forbear her
till her moan be made. (*Aside.*)
[*Exeunt Attendants.*
ueen. Let me look on him. It is
marred not much;
s was a fair face of a boy's alive.
othwell. It had been better had he
died ere man.
ueen. That hardly was he yester-
day. A man!
at heart, what brain of manhood
had God sown
his poor fair fool's flesh to bear him
fruit?
What seed of spirit or counsel? what
good hope
That might have put forth flower in
any sun?
We have plucked none up who cut him
off at root,
But a tare only or a thorn. His cheek
Is not much changed, though since I
wedded him
His eyes had shrunken and his lips
grown wan
With sickness and ill living. Yester-
day,
Man or no man, this was a living soul;
What is this now? This tongue that
mourned to me,
These lips that mine were mixed with,
these blind eyes
That fastened on me following, these
void hands
That never plighted faith with man and
kept,
Poor hands that paddled in the sloughs
of shame,
Poor lips athirst for women's lips and
wine,
Poor tongue that lied, poor eyes that
looked askant
And had no heart to face men's wrath
or love
As who could answer either,—what
work now
Doth that poor spirit which moved
them? To what use
Of evil or good should hell put this or
heaven,
Or with what fire of purgatory annealed
Shall it be clean and strong, yet keep
in it
One grain for witness of what seed it
was,
One thread, one shred inwoven with it
alive,
To show what stuff time spun it of,
and rent?
I have more pity such things should be
born
Than of his death; yea, more than I
had hate,
Living, of him.
Bothwell. Since hate nor pity now
Or helps or hurts him, were we not
as wise

To take but counsel for the day's work here,
And put thought of him with him underground?
Queen. I do but cast once more away on him
The last thought he will ever have of mine.
You should now love me well.
Bothwell. Ay should I, sweet.
Queen. I think you shall: it were more hard than death,
You should not love me.
Bothwell. Nay, not possible.
Queen. I think God never set in flesh of man
Such heart as yours would be, to love me not,
Bothwell. Will you give order for his funeral?
Queen. Ay.
But if you loved not — I would know that now,
That I might die even this day, and my hands
Shed no more blood nor strive more for your sake;
For if I live, whose life is of your love,
I shall take on them more of toil and blood,
To stain and tire them laboring all their life.
I would not die bloodguiltier than is need,
With redder hands than these and wearier heart,
And have no love to cleanse and comfort them.
For this man, I forgive him.
Bothwell. For which fault?
Queen. That he touched ever and defiled my life
With life of his and death. I am fain to know
You do not love me for his sake the less
Who so have soiled me with him.
Bothwell. Shall I not
Swear it, with him for sponsor to mine oath?
Queen. Kiss me before his face here for a sign.
Bothwell. You have strange doubts and dreams.
Queen. I will not have.
When part we hence, and whither?
Bothwell. I have word
Your careful warden, the grave lord of Mar,
Will hardly give my followers at your prayer
Place to come in to Stirling at our back.
Here now the streets begin to sound and swarm
So that my guard is now for more than pride;
Wherefore I hold it well we take with us
Some friends of our own counsel, as Argyle,
Huntley, my brother-in-law that shall be none,
With Maitland and the archbishop, and set forth
To the lord Seyton's, who shall give us house
Till this loud world fall stiller than it is.
Queen. Be it where you will, and how: do you but lead,
Would I not follow naked through the world?
For him of whose dead face mine eyes take leave
As my free soul of shameful thought on him,
Let him have private burial some fit night
By David whom he slew. I mind me now
'Tis not a year since I fled forth with him
Even through the graves where he shall lie alone,
And passing through their dusty deadly ways
For some few minutes of the rustling night
I felt his hand quake: he will quake not now
To sleep there all night long. See you to that. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — SEYTON CASTLE.

LORD HERRIES *and* SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Herries. So stands it, sir: she hath put into his hands,

sides the lordship of the port of Leith,
e castle's government of Edinburgh, Inchkeith and Blackness, three master keys
at keep the doors o' the kingdom. In Dunbar
e sits now lord, and gathers men to hold
her next gift Dumbarton: while she sends
privy message for a priest to plead
ith the French king, — that by his mother's mouth
d his own hand hath warned her, if her lord
ep unrevenged, she being so shamed henceforth
ust hold them for her enemies, and put off
thought to flee for fear into their guard
om peril of her subjects, — even to him
e sends for payment of her dower foregone
herewith to levy hireling bands in France
th but her babe for captain called, and be
nced round at least with all of these she may,
whose despatch none here must know before,
r, if these fail her, of her frustrate aim;
en, ere her mourning month be here played out
th hound and horn and soldierlike delights
recreate her natural heart and life,
e must repass to Holyrood, and meet
e ambassador from England, Killigrew,
o comes to find folk sorrowing and in fear
th counsel for our peril and our grief,
d falls upon us feasting; and to him
e plights her faith that by this parliament
ll Bothwell have his trial, and the cause
Be sifted clear in the eyes of all good men;
Wherewith content he parts, or discontent,
I know not, but is gone; and she come back
Takes heed no more than of a harp unstrung
What plaint or plea, what charge or menace, comes
From her lord's father, but to his demand
For convocation of the nobles made
Returns her word their house shall meet in spring,
And puts his charge by lightly as she may.
Of all this, nothing, in my mind, goes well.

Melville. Nor aught in mine. Your fellows of her faith
Who stand as yet in England on her side
Will fall off from her, hearing what I doubt
All ears will hear too soon: I have shown it her
By letter sent me from a faithful Scot
That long hath wrought among them on her part,
And freely thence wrote all his fear for me
To lay before her, and his grief to hear
Such bruit of her intent as could but slay
The opinion of her judgment, who must lose,
By such design, God's favor and her fame,
And in each kingdom that should kiss her hand
Each man's heart born her heritage, and miss
The noble mark she shot at. I, adjured
Of him that wrote to bring this in her eye,
Gave her to read it, which she gave again,
Silent; then came the secretary to me
A short while thence, and took me by the hand,
Desiring me as by the queen's desire

To let him see it, who had given him late to know
I had shown her a strange letter, and devised
By mine own counsel for Lord Bothwell's wreck;
And having read, What thing was in my mind,
He said, to do this, which being known to the earl,
As shortly there was need to fear it should,
Would cause him surely seek my life? And I,
It was a sore thing for true men to see
So good a princess run on utter wreck,
And no man be so far concerned in her
As to forewarn of peril. He replied,
As one who had newly left her wroth, I had done
More honestly than wisely; bade me fly
Ere the earl came up from dining; and being flown
I know he sought to slay me, who lay hid
Till his main rage was slackened; and the queen,
Who had made him swear to seek no scathe of mine,
When at their meeting next she showed it him,
Chid him as who would cause her to be left
Of all her servants: then he swore anew
I should receive no harm; whereof again
Being advertised I spake with her, and showed
She had never done me so much wrong as this,
To make the letter a device of mine
Which came even whence I had given her word; and yet
Had it not come, I had held me bound to speak
Freely, with reverence and humility,
My thought as did that letter, being of mind
At one therewith. But she would give no ear:
Nor is there force in counsel or man's wit
To avert this ill she binds upon herself,
Who breaks the bonds in twain that hold her friends,
And fetters her own feet with gyves of steel,
When she hath need of them to stand or flee
Before the face of peril multiform
That lightens on us flame-like: you, my lord,
Whose love she hath proven, are not of me to learn
The immediate feature of it.

Herries. Alas! not I:
I have taken too much note thereof, and stand
Too near its fangs to live of them unscathed,
Except I make haste hence.

Melville. What haste, my lord?

Herries. I have spoken with her of their purpose blown
From lip to lip already on men's breath,
To loose the bonds that bind her lover yet
By witness of the lady of Buccleuch,
Who shall proclaim herself his paramour
And pre-contracted to him by promise-plight
To prove his wife no lawful wife, but bound,
Will she or no, and love him not or love,
To sue divorce from him; if all this fail,
Then by remonstrance of their kindred blood
Found some four cousinships away, this bond
Shall melt or break that parts him from the queen.

Melville. Why, ere his marriage with the Lady Jane,
She had her dispensation from the Pope,
For the blood mixed between them, of all bars
Which might have maimed it with impediment.

Herries. So had she, but they think to cover it

with a veil of invalidity
texted for pretence, or with dumb show
rkly disclaimed: this shall not cumber them;
l they will buy compliance and good-will
Huntley to his sister's putting off
restoration of his forfeit lands.
Melville. All tongues i' the land will as one mouth of fire
death and shame against it.
Terries. So said I.
Melville. So said you to her?
Terries. I said so; whereat she,
'twere half smiling in a wondering shame,
f mourning to be guiltlessly misjudged,
h fervent eyes' fall and with scornful lips
tests me, never had she thought of it.
erefore I hold it ill to tarry here.
Melville. Your wisdom shall do well to spare no speed,
get it gone from eyeshot of them both.
Terries. I know it; yet would I plead again with her,
pity and honor of the imperilled state,
t should be shaken with her fall to death,
the crown shattered into shards of gold.
as a wolf anhungered and awaked,
t long hath slept and starved, with foodless dreams
aging its blunt fangs through bloodless hours,
common people, that in dumb dim rest,
h heartless hopes assuaging its blind heart,
h fed for ages on itself asleep,
ws now the keen teeth and the kindled eyes
ravening heads innumerable, that gape
glare about the wide ways of the world,
ing their meat of God; and if he fail,
Then of the devil that burns in minds of men
Rebellious, whom their heat of heart eats up
Till the fire fasten on authority
To lay red hands of ruin on all state,
And leave in ashes empire; as of late
This Ket in England, and his like that swarm
At heel of the new creeds in Lutheran lands
To pluck the sun out of the heaven of rule,
And leave men dark and kingless. Hath not Knox
Struck with his fangs of speech on monarchy
No less than on the Church that first was stung,
Preaching for all men knowledge equally
And prostitute and perilous freedom shared
With all blear eyes, brute mouths, and unwashed hands,
That lust for change, and take all fires for light,
Except the sun's wherein their fathers walked?
And shall not these at any breach break in
That flaws the sea-wall which forbade their sea
To drown all banks that bound it? She will make
Of all that lived in Scotland hers and ours
A ruin and republic of strewn wrecks,
Ranks rent, bonds broken, all things orderless,
A commonwealth of dead men's bones and dung,
Dust, mire, and blood, and one red rank of beasts
That rage and revel in equality.
Melville. 'Tis true, the commons are as waters chafed
Since this wind blew amongst them: wave by wave
It lifts their heads up, and the murmuring air
Breathes hard and blackens with the blast of change.

Herries. And were none touched with danger but herself,
This yet were pity enough for tears of blood,
So fair she is, and less by place than kind
Royal, so high and so assured of spirit,
So full of all things all men love or fear,
Heart's light and fire, a soul born winged, with eyes
That mate the sun's eye and the lightning's; yea,
It were past count of pity, past men's thought,
That she should fall for love's light sake self-slain.
Melville. There were one way to serve her that would be
Most thankless, being thankworthiest; but none else.
Herries. That were no way for feet that would not walk
Red as her enemies' did, whose passage shook
With its near sound her life and fame; such ways
Let Morton take, or Maitland's weaponed wit,
Whose words are swords.
Melville. It may be so they will.
Herries. Death?
Melville. Nay, who knows when death may come?
Herries. Why, they
Who strike the spur into his fleshless side,
Who prick him forward with their craft for goad,
Or put for sword their hatred in his hand.
They have done deeds of deadlier policy
Than make submissive show toward Bothwell here,
Then snare and slay him, or put the queen in ward:
Would they do this, they might be serviceable
But perilous must be, putting hand to work
That treads nigh treason though for loyalty.
Melville. Whose may know their mind, it is not I.
Herries. She hath sent for Murray hither; in his eye
We may take note which way their faction looks.
If yet toward violence and red-handed craft,
This mood of hers will strip her for their strokes
Naked, and leave us handless that would fight
On her just side against them. God mend all!
Enter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, SEYTON, *the* MARIES, *and Attendants.*
Queen. The wind has moved my blood like wine; I am full
Even to the heart's root of its spirit of life.
Flew not my hawk the last flight well, that sent
The tumbling hern down from her highest? I think
You have none better. Is our brother come?
Seyton. He is now alighting, madam.
Queen. By this hand,
I would when we must 'light from horse we might
Take wing instead, and so what time we live
Live ever at glad speed save when we sleep!
It points and edges the dull steel of life,
To feel the blood and brain in us renew
By help of that life lifting us, and speed
That being not ours is mixed with us and serves.
I would hold council, and wage war, and reign,
Not in walled chambers nor close pens of state,
But or in saddle or at sea, my steed
As a sea-wave beneath the wind and me,
Or the sea serving as a bitted steed
That springs like air and fire. Time comes, they say,
When we love rest, house-keeping sloth, and calms:
To me I think it will not come alive.
Herries. Madam, I would change yet one word with you

Ere I go hence, or others take your ear.
Queen. So shall you, sir; yet is my heart too light,
And its live blood too merry from the chase,
And all my life too full of the air of joy
Whereon it mounts up falcon-like for prey,
And hovers at its wings' width ere it strike,
To give wise words wise welcome: yet what grace
May to your grave counsels will I show
And modesty of audience. — Tell my brother
Shortly will receive him. [*Exeunt all but the* QUEEN *and* HERRIES.]
My good lord,
It is for that old honor and true love
I bear your high name and your flawless faith
That yet mine ear makes way now for your words,
I trust they will not wound it for its pains
With any tuneless or intemperate breath.
Herries. Had I no heart, or in the heart I have
No love to serve you, madam, and no faith,
I had parted hence without more toil of tongue
For strife of speech unpalatable and harsh
On ears made wide for music; but in me
The heart enough to burn with fire of pain,
Not to lighten with that fire their eyes
For whose sake it consumes me, when I see
Danger and death masked as true men and bold
Attend about them with sheathed knives in hand
And shut mouths as of serpents. Let me not
Incense again your flame of spirit and scorn
With faint and void reiterance of dead words
That spent in vain their spirit before: I speak
Not now so much to move you as would God
I had the might to move, but of myself
Rather to save my soul of faith alive,
And my deep heart of duty toward your grace,
By speech though fruitless, and by love though lost,
That will not pass forth silent, and give way
To loud-tongued ruin that shall speak too high
For ears to close against it. Queen of Scots,
Lady that have the loftiest life in hand
Even yet that ever was of queen on earth, —
Last hope of men that hope through you in God,
Last comfort of his Church, light of his lamp
That men have nigh blown out with blasts of night, —
O you to whose fair face and hand uplift
The treble-kingdom islands should turn back
Out of the shadow of storm to follow them,
And in the shadow of faith instead lie down
Beneath the wings that covered your crowned head,
Even hers that brood above her fold and yours,
The Church your mother's, that by no hand else
Looks yet to gather three lands in and save, —
Who have the heart and the eye and the hour for this
Which to none other God may give again
So as you have them, — you that should be writ
In all the royal records of the world
Savior, the light and the right hand of God
Shown in a woman, to bring back and build
What was blown down or shed as dust on the air, —
You that have spirit and mind to apprehend,

And to that apprehension put swift hand,
Nor slow of soul nor fearful, — you, our queen,
And England's heir, that should make higher on earth
The name of Scot than any star in heaven,
And on the cleft growth of two thorny stems
Bid one rose flower of Catholic royalty
Not to be plucked or trampled, — Oh, will you,
So great, so fair and fearless as you are,
That were you no queen, or such other one
As no such high cause calls on, you would seem
Not less a thing made to heroic end,
A creature crowned and armed by God to bear
His witness to his work, and in man's eye
Stand signal-wise lighting the beaconed sea, —
Will you put all this as a garment off,
And change it like a vesture? By your life
Which is the life of this land's majesty,
And your high soul which is our spirit of hope,
Slay not all these: help them that trust in you;
Help God, lest we believe him for your sake
Ill-minded toward us for our sin, to turn
This empire to a populous wilderness,
A riotous desert where things vile are crowned,
And high made low, and low things set on high,
And rule trod under with foul feet and bare,
And kingdom parcelled by hard hands and red.
Pity this people: give not up your realm
To its own madness that takes fire at yours,
And lights its ruin at your own ruin, to run
By that blind light darkling to death and hell;
Cast not your name down under foot of men
For such ill cause as loveless love that is
Light lord of foolish women, or such will
As wherewith men self-slaughtered gird themselves.
For shame and pity and peril shall be they
Who shall attend and wed you to your will,
And the ring broken of the kingdom's peace
That is yet whole and circular as a crown
Shall be the new ring on your wedded hand,

Queen. Have I not said I never thought of it?

Herries. I but beseech you, keep from thought of it,
Or from such show as puts it in men's minds,

Queen. If this be all your counsel or your care,
You crave but what you have: I have given no cause,
By favor shown to faith and loyal hearts,
For the evil-witted world to tax me of love.
Twice have you had mine ear now to this tale,
And thrice I pray you that you seek it not.

Herries. I shall no more. God keep your grace in joy!

Enter BOTHWELL *and* MURRAY.

Queen. Good morrow, brother; and you, my lord, good day,
Since you go hence.

Bothwell. Goes my lord from us yet?

Herries. Even now I take my leave. Farewell, my lords,
And God be with your counsels. [*Exit.*

Bothwell. Fay, he shall.
The queen was fain to have your voice, my lord,
Ere she go back to the distempered town.

Murray. That shall she have, sir.

Queen. Brother, we hear word
How the good town is troubled of lewd men

ith libels writ and hung about the streets,
at in our servants' name deface our own
ith fierce invention: wherefore I desired
our counsel with my lord here and good help
r satisfaction of well-willing men.
Murray. Even such will tell you it mislikes the town
at Lennox, as they say, should be debarred
om entrance save with six men and no more
hold his cause up on the trial day,
d the main witness on his part refused under charge of treason for his words
t forth in writing on the Tolbooth gates;
is makes them doubt of justice to be done,
d brood or babble of devised delay,
ith tongues and minds diverse and dangerous.
Queen. What!
all one proclaimed our traitor pass unscathed
bear again false witness, for whose sake
e ports are guarded, and the skipper marked
r death who helps him from this kingdom forth
mock the judgment whence he stands attaint
foregone treason; and must now stand free,
d the law loose him, and receive his word
a true man's and taintless? What are they
om by such witness Lennox would impeach
ides my lord here who shall answer him?
Murray. James Balfour, and your outland serving-folk,
astian, Joseph Rizzio, with two French,
n of Bordeaux, and Francis, of your train.
Queen. They shall have trial, and answer it.
Murray. 'Twere best
They did so soonest: time grows full of tongues.
There was one late went through the streets by night,
With four or five accompanied for guard
That would let none take knowledge of him, crying
Of his own guilt most lamentably on God,
Lord, open heaven, and pour down of thy wrath
Vengeance on me and them that have cut off
The innocent blood! whom the chief magistrates
Have seized, and cast into the four thieves' pit;
But still his cry hangs in the common ear.
Queen. Some traitor hired, or madman; but I sent
To seek the comfort of your hand and help
For weightier cause than of such tongues.
Murray. What cause?
Queen. That shall he show who bears most part therein;
Yet are you parcel of it, and I myself
For love of both and honor toward you.
Speak. [*To* BOTHWELL.
Bothwell. My lord, I doubt not but your heart conceived
Never that thing whereto being done you feared
To set your hand in sign: I therefore pray you
To look upon the charge for which I stand
In the land's eye accountable, as one
That was consenting with the rest our friends
To what for my poor profit was not done,
Nor only plotted for no end but mine;
And, for the part your honor has herein,
To underwrite the bond that writes me safe,
And set your name for seal upon my side.

Queen. So much would I beseech you too: the bond
By you subscribed here in my lord's defence
Shall be the signet of your faith and love
Set on my heart and his that honor you.
Murray. I would my duty might in all things serve
No less your honor than maintain mine own;
But I will set no hand to any bond
Shall bind me to defence or fellowship
Of deeds whereof I know myself no part.
I gave consent to no more than divorce
Between two hands mismated, king's and queen's,
Whereby the kingdom's heart was rent in twain,
And reconcilement found not where to stand;
But of no red and secret bond of blood
Heard I the bruit before the deed took fire.
Bothwell. Will you so swear? what! none?
Murray. I have said; and you,
That reft your kinsman Balfour by device
Out of my hand and thwarted judgment, see
Your heart be set not now to climb too high
A stair whereon the foot that slips grows red,
And, stumbling once in blood, falls whence nor wing
Nor hand can lift it from the pit again.
Queen. Vex not yourself lest he should fall or stand
With whom you stand or fall not.
Bothwell. My desire
Was toward no help of riddling counsellors,
But of such friends as speak with hand for tongue
And acts for parables: your wit, my lord,
Is nothing of the queen's need nor of mine.
Murray. It may be, no; but to make trial of that,
Ere I take ship for France, the ways being barred
By force and strife through Flanders to the south
And those fair towns that with her highness' leave
Shall call me guest a while in Italy,
I am bound for London, where I fear and hope
My tongue may serve her more than here your hands
If it make fair her cause in English eyes.
Bothwell. What hath her cause to do with their bleared sight,
Or with her name their judgment? Who need care
What color we that breathe with our own lips
Wear in the mist made of their breath far off?
Murray. The ambassador that bore her last word back
Hath but made way for one at point to come
Whose message, carrying weight as in wise ears
It needs must carry, will take form and force
From present witness of his eye that reads
What mind is borne here and what work is done,
What judgment or what counsel most bears weight;
Which it imports us for this land's great sake
That the English queen misknow not nor mistead
For fault or fraud of darkling evidence.
Bothwell. And you it is must give those blind eyes sight,
Shape to the shadows of that ignorance, form
To their loose judgment of us? What have we,
What hath our Scotland here or queen of Scots,
To do with English tongues? can we not strike
Nor stand nor walk alone, but for our need
Must use their hands and feet, their wits and eyes,

o help us live, or live not? By my life,
Which is not held in pawn yet of their leave,
had rather be an English horse or ass
han on these terms a Scot, to square my will
y their inscribed conditions.
Murray. At your will
es your own way of life; nor yet this land's,
or theirs that living should be lords of it.
adam, to God's care I commend your grace
ho take with careful heart my leave of you,
est you too much should lack the care of men.
Queen. Be not too careful for my sake: your leave
as given ere you could take it. Sir, farewell.
Murray. Farewell, as you shall will it. [*Exit.*
Bothwell. God be with you!
our wisdom shall not be so hot of foot
t it may be outspeeded. If it lay
ots with the stranger, our prevention here
ust pluck the fangs out of its craft. And first
ith his own hand shall Huntley draw the bond
hereto will we set ours in pledge ere long
o make them fast by contract: I being free
o plight mine own, as by consent unbound
om hers that was my wife pretended; you,
ing by this troublous time bent and inclined
o seek some stay in wedlock, and put off
ie weak estate of widowhood, yet loath,
or worthy reasons of grave strength, to choose
gain a stranger subject, have made choice
Of me desertless for my fair deserts,
And purpose even on heel of my divorce
For their good cause to wed me: this subscribed
Shall in my keeping be laid up, and straight
Hence must we back to that loud town of yours,
And take our danger by the throat; proclaim
At once my trial; if it be possible,
Before word come from England; let the post
That brings you counsel of Elizabeth's
Find the cause judged, and the cry fallen again,
And no link hanging of thè gyves of law
Round our free feet and steadfast.
Queen. Ah! not mine,
That are fast bound, and yet can stand not fast
Except my love's strength hold them up, and strike
These iron toils in sunder. If the bond
Could bind and loose indeed, knit and unknit
Hands that must part from hands that are to meet,
With force of more than writing, all my heart
Should bleed glad drops to sign and seal it. Sir,
Here was again our enemy in mine ears
Forewarning me of marriage; the same tongue
That was before a serpent at your heel
Shot out anew to sting it; but you know
The craft of this state horseleech, that by fraud
Takes pleasure to bear all the world in hand
That no one can be sure of him, and we
May least of all be by such lips allured
To trust and find them dangerous.
Bothwell. Nay, by God,
I mind me how he left his neighbor friends
In his faith's name to hang for hostages
Whose necks paid forfeit of his broken bond,

And made his oath a halter for the Lairds
Of Lochinvar and Garlies. By my life
That this keen tongue would strike at, in my mind
It were the best work worth a good man's hand
To quit them on Lord Herries.
Queen. No, let be:
You will unpeople me this land of friends.
Mine he must live, or lose his name, and yours
For my name's sake he shall be.
Bothwell. So might I
Find at his hands such friendship as they twain
Whose throats for him were writhen; and such a friend
Is he that stands behind our deed, and says
He never heard of manslaying, fie! not he, —
Our darkling brother with close lips and clean.
The blood was no part of his bond, he says,
That his eyes winked on while his hand was dry;
He will not bear us witness, nor take part
With me that have done more than blink at blood.
He will to London, but to speak for you,
That will he, being a kindly man of kind,
Whole-blooded in his love and faith to you,
God wot, no bastard in his brotherhood.
I would give God a year out of my life
That I have kinglike hope to live with you,
For one sweet breath of time to strike at him,
And let my sword's lip drink his body dry,
And with one deep kiss drain his flesh of blood.
Who smells not by the savor of his faith
On what close nest of foul and fledgling hopes
His trust sits brooding to build up himself
By overthrowing of that crowned head which keeps
His misbegotten forehead bare of gold —
And with my hand shall keep it?
Queen. Ay, though all
That breathe on earth mine enemies at his beck
Rose by the light of his ambiguous eyes
With his sheathed hand to strike, and leave ungirt
This forfeit head with empire: but I know
A stronger hand bared for my help and stay, —
This that I touch, this that I love; the star —
That points my feet on pilgrimage, the staff
That stays my steps back to that troublous town
Whereof they are weary, yet would halt not now,
But tread more fleet than fire their fiery way
To that fair end where they were fain to be.
He will set forth to-morrow.
Bothwell. Ere we go,
I will take order that men's tongues be clipt
Who show too broad their conscience of remorse.
There was a knave of Balfour's in our trust
That hath by this, being found unsure of mouth,
Resigned it to the counsel-keeping worm.
If more there be that live not stingless yet,
The same dumb mouth that has nor lips nor tongue
Must open for them privily: the grave
Hath gorge enough for all such secret food,
And will not babble of the hands that feed.
For them that being in blood of our own kind

l stand elsewhere against me than
in court,
ll make present proffer of myself
answer them in arms.
ueen. You shall not fight.
othwell. Not if no need be.
ueen. There shall be no need.
in this cause, you shall not need to
fight.
will set on the trial presently,
after we may sleep with no blood
more.

NE IV. — THE UPPER CHAMBER IN HOLYROOD.

The QUEEN *and* MARY BEATON.

ueen. Is it not hard on ten?
Mary Beaton. At point to strike.
ueen. This forenoon will outlast the
night for length.
looks the morning?
Mary Beaton. Like the time of year:
heaven is red, and full of wind;
the clouds
rent and routed of the striving sun
a lost army.
ueen. Is there no noise abroad?
ary Beaton. The throngs grow thick
in rumor; faces scowl,
burn, brows bend, and all the cry
o' the crowd
ts to break forth but till a fire-
flaught fall
make the dumb brands speak, and
shoot out flame,
n he shall pass for whom it waits
to burn.
have I seen as great a throng from
hence
ets there now.
ueen. I would he had thought to-
day
ride with doubled guard! What
brawl is there?
ary Beaton. The messenger from
Berwick, as I think,
would have entrance to you, and
is thrust back
he lord Bothwell's kin that keep
the gates.
ueen. What! here so soon? I will
not see him till night.
I am asleep; if there be brawls i' the
court,
Call out the troopers, bid my French
guard forth
To quell all rioters.
Mary Beaton. They are of your own
part
That make the brawl, my lord's men
and your guard
That press about the gateway.
Queen. The cry sinks:
Is he not come, that so their noise is
fallen?
Mary Beaton. And Maitland with
him: he signs them silent, takes
From the English messenger a letter
sealed,
And leaves all still.
Queen. I prayed him see me first
Before he rode to trial. All will be well,
If he have stayed their storm, and keep
his heart
High as his fortune.
Enter BOTHWELL.
Is that brawl at end?
Bothwell. Here is a letter by a hot-
foot post
Brought from Sir William Drury, that
his queen
Through him commends her counsel in
to you,
And bids you, or my thought belies it,
show
All favor and furtherance to your
enemy's plea,
Lennox, whose cause she finds most
fair, and would not
For your own sake see slighted or put
by,
Lest your fame bleed: look if she say
not so;
Else I know nothing of her maiden
mind,
Who sometime lived her prisoner.
Queen. Let that rest;
But tell me what the spring was of this
noise
That shook our hearing: would he
speak perforce —
This English post, though bidden back
— with me?
Bothwell. But that our fellows thrust
him from the gate:

My captain of the castle, a stalwart guard,
The Laird of Skirling, that I put in charge,
Called to the guide aloud, he should be hanged
For bringing English villains through to us here,
And hands were there to reive the rope to him;
Then drew your guard together and our troops,
Whose musters line the straitened streets with steel
That holds embanked their muttering multitudes
Till I ride through; and those within the gates
Hurtled together with blind cries and thrusts,
But at my sight fell silent as a sea
Settling, that growls yet with the sunken wind,
And holds its peace with unslaked wrath. Then I
Took from the pressed and laboring messenger
His letter for your hand, who were not risen,
And should ere night receive him: so I said,
And thus it shall suffice you do, so be it
We bear the bell to-day in parliament,
Where I should be by this at bar, to stand
And make mine answer.

Queen. I am not sick of fear,
Yet my heart loathes its burden of this hour,
And beats and drops like a bird wounded. Nay,
I do not hold you: go; 'tis but my hand
Fastens on yours; my heart would have you gone,
And here again to assure me of good speed.
Whom have we of the judges on our side,
Tell me once more, whom doubtful-colored, whom
Our enemies certain? let me know it again,
That I may read the bede-roll of their names
Here over in my heart while you are gone
To make it sure and strong, come evil or good,
That neither find me heartless.

Bothwell. Of our part
The lord of Arbroath for the Hamiltons
Is as his father's person, Chatelherault,
And Cassilis a mainstay safe as steel;
Caithness and Herries are such friends of yours
As love me less for your sake, yet I think
Must strike to-day beside us; one man most
I would we might have razed out of the roll,
Which is the assessor Lindsay; who shall be
As poison to us; and evil is our chance
That Morton being of kin to your dead man
Should not sit here to help, as but for this
I would perforce have bound him to our side:
But let this be; we shall bear bravely through
For all their factions and fierce policies
As knives ensheathed against us, or being foiled
Find surer issue than they wot of. So,
With such good hope as grows of a good heart,
Give me God-speed.

Queen. God-speed you as I pray
You may speed ever: all my prayer is spent,
I can no more of wishing; what I would,
That must you will, having my heart in you,
That beats but with your blood, thrills with your sense,
Thinks with your thought, desires with your desire,
And lives upon your living. Where you go,
You bear me with you; where your face is set

ıe eye takes outlook, and where falls your foot
ead beside you silent. Oh! this day ll be to us as the crown o' the wave that turns,
d bears inshore the lading of our lives,
th all the might of its great heart that breaks
d brings us into harbor; we shall stand
gh on the beach where it was spent, and praise
e faithful hour that served us; yea, even this
ll be a dear one to us, held fast at heart
ıen all the pain and doubt of it is dead,
d lovingly remembered: you shall look
m your high place beside your humble love
h kingly eye on this dead day, and think
w she that set her crown about your head,
d put her own beneath your foot, as now
e you fare forth, and kissed you.
othwell. I am returned,
I pass forth, already in my heart,
h my cause crowned: I cannot doubt of speed,
o have your face before mine eyes as fire
l keep your words' heat in mine ear to burn
should shrink, and sting my spirit alive
love's and shame's sake. When we meet at night,
ing's kiss will I set upon these lips
t seal me royal ere I part. Farewell. [*Exit.*
ueen. I would mine eye were in my heart to go
h that beside him; but the heart it is
now in the eye and follows where it may,
a street's length; then part they, and the sight
Turns back, but not the thought; such wings it hath
As the sight hath not, and is subtler nerved
Than the swift spirit of the eye. O my life's light!
This is not I that looks forth after you
To feed her eyesight, but who leaves you not,
Who rides beside you, breathes out of your lips,
Looks through your eyes, and triumphs in your heart,—
That unseen and inseparate thing is I.
Look, he is up: how royally he rides,
As no king else on earth! and waves to me,
As who should say, Be glad; and glad I am,
Who have the lordliest lover in the world,
And the most heart to love him. Ay, that steed
Should be the higher of heart that feels him stride,
And moves the merrier-mettled: by none such
Was it before bestridden.
Mary Beaton. Was not this
Lord Darnley's horse?
Queen. Ay, when Lord Darnley was.
Mary Beaton. The horse he loved of all the rest, and fed
Ere he bestrode it ever?
Queen. Like enough:
What ails it yet to have eaten of his hand?
It bears not now the worse a better man.
Mary Beaton. Nay, so it seems: it bounds not as in wrath,
For aught I see, beneath him, but heaves up
A sidelong head toward his new hand, and turns
The light back on him of a joyful eye.
So is it with only beasts that are beloved:
They have not hearts like ours.
Queen. What need they have?
I would have nothing love him as I love,

And had it heart it would; yet I do think
All beasts and men are mad that love him not
As I should surely were I beast or man.
He can no longer see my handkerchief;
Let us go in: I will not sit and wait
With the street's hustling faces in my sight. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE TOLBOOTH.

BOTHWELL, *with* ORMISTON *and others attending, at the bar;* ARGYLE *presiding as Lord Justice;* LINDSAY *as assessor;* CAITHNESS, CASSILIS, ROTHES, ARBROATH, MAXWELL, HERRIES, *and others, as jury;* ROBERT CUNNINGHAM *as spokesman for Lennox.*

Ormiston (*aside to* BOTHWELL). Fie! look not down so at your feet, my lord:
What devil is this that irks you? in your face
A fool might read you what you are: why, so
Might a man look that were now going to death.
Hold up your face, for God's sake, and look blithe;
Alas and aye woe worth them that devised
The thing that shall make all us mourn, I trow,
For you that now look sadly.
Bothwell. Hold your peace:
I would not yet it were to do; I have
An outgate any way whereby to pass,
As ye shall know, and soon. Trouble me not.
Argyle. My lords, ye have heard how to the indictment read
The accused who stands at his own instance here
Returns his plea of guiltless; and thereon
The accuser next invoked to approve his charge,
Nor answering nor appearing, leaves no cause
For us to judge; but here in his default
Is risen his servant to sustain his part
And unawares among us unrequired
Take up this charge here fallen, or stretch at least
Some form across of pretext wide enough
To cover with excuse this lack of charge,
Which else might seem with emptiness of cause
To mock your judgments; wherefore, if ye will,
He stands to plead before us.
Caithness. We are content.
Robert Cunningham. My lords, I am here but in my master's name,
The earl of Lennox, to declare what cause
This day constrains his absence; which in brief
Is first the brief time given for so great work,
Next that he stands now naked of his friends
And fellowship of servants to maintain
His honor with the surety of his life;
And, having help of no friend but himself,
He hath laid on me commandment to desire
A day sufficient for that weight of cause
Which he shall have to keep it; and if hence
Your lordships at this present shall proceed,
Here I protest that if the assize to-day,
By their twelve persons that upon this charge
Shall enter now on panel, speak him clear
Who stands accused for murder of the king,
It shall be wilful error in men's eyes,
And not abuse of ignorance, by this cause
That all men know him for murderer; and hereto
Upon this protestation I require
Of your high court a document to stand
And set my lord's right here on register,

d those men's wrong who put it by
to-day.
rgyle. This is some reason if the
ground be good
ereon his protest is built up, to ex-
cuse
fault of witness by defect of time;
here that ground is shaken, that
we find,
letters of his own writ to the
queen,
lord of Lennox earnest to bring on,
th forward expedition as of fire,
s cause for trial, and by all pleas
intent
enforce this court make haste, and
being convoked
spatch with breathless justice and
short stay
e work wherein he seems to accuse
us now
too much heat to move too fast,
and mar
e perfect end of trial with force of
speed,
venting him of witness. Where-
fore then
s his own will so keen, his plaint so
loud,
strong his protestation, to procure
speed too late reproached, too soon
required?
re are we met for judgment, whom
himself
e the queen summon, with insistent
heat
l sharp solicitation urged of wrong,
, with the stroke of an imperative
tongue,
though to impel some loath or lag-
gard heart,
l found instead a free and forward
will
ner to meet his own; here sits the
court,
re stands the man of him or his
impeached
give them loyal answer; where sits
he?
ere speaks his proof? where stand
his witnesses?
at sentence of what judges shall be
given

Where none stands forth to accuse:
Here are but words,
Surmises, light and loud and loose, that
blow
In the air of nameless lips and bab-
blers' breath
From ear to ear about the wide-mouthed
world:
These are not for our judgment.
Caithness. We sit here
To find if there be proof or likelihood
More than of common tongues that
mark a man
Guilty, and know not why this man or
that,
But some name they must have to feed
upon;
And in my mind, where witness there is
none
Nor prosecution of a personal cause,
Even should we err to find the accused
man free,
It were no wilful error, nor this court
In any just man's sight accountable
As for unrighteous judgment, being cut
off
From evidence that it was met to hear;
Which we reject not, but require in-
deed,
Yet can by no solicitous mean procure.
Moreover, sirs, one flaw there is to note,
More evident than these proofs in-
visible, —
Even in the letter of the charge, which
bears,
Ye see, the ninth day's date of Febru-
ary,
When all we know that on the tenth it
was
This violence, by what hand soe'er, was
done:
So that I see not, for my simple part,
How any man, for that which no man
did,
Should stand condemned; for at this
date assigned
Was no such deed as this done in the
world.
Maxwell. Why, let the charge be
drawn again, and straight:
The court is mocked in this.
Caithness. How mocked, my lord?
It is necessity of law, to keep

Pure hands by perfect heed of flawless words;
And that you stood the dead man's friend alive
Gives you not right nor reason to rise up
And tax the reason or the right of law.
Maxwell. Right! where is right in all this circumstance,
Or aught but wrong and broken judgment? where
Justice or shame or loyalty, to try
The truth whereon red fraud and violence tread,
And smother up the tongueless cry of blood?
Are we not here to judge of murder done,
And either from an innocent brow take off
The spot of its suspicion, or convince
The branded forehead of bloodguiltiness?
Is there no counsel on the part accused,
Nor answer of defensive argument
But of close-lipped evasion? and the court
In this forsooth is mocked not! We shall stand
The shameful signs of laughter to the world,
And loathing to men loyal, if this pass
With no more trial but mockery, and the land
Sit silent, and attaint of innocent blood
Before the face of all men that expect
For our own sake what justice we shall show
Or be defamed forever.
Arbroath. Sirs, meseems
Where no charge is, that no response can be;
Where none impeaches, none can stand accused:
And of what mouth what challenge is put forth,
And on what witness what impeachment hangs,
To implead of guilt the man we sit to try?
Herein I say it is the court is mocked,
Even all of us, and all the baffled land,
And most this noble man that unaccused
Stands at our bar, and finds not to confront
One witness, nor one enemy to beat back,
But only as 'twere a wind that sounds, a breath
That shifts and falters in the face of proof,
A blast that envy blows, and fear breaks off,
Disabled of its nature, by itself
Frustrate and maimed of its own evil will.
Lindsay. Who talks of envious or of fearful heart?
We hear the general judgment of the land
Cry out for trial, and from foreign tongues
Reproach cast on us that we cast off heed:
What should we do for shame if in this cause,
For doubt of one man's friends or of what power
Might stand behind to buckler him at need,
We durst not move, nor, though the world looked on,
Show but a face of justice?
Cassilis. Must we set
Our judgments by the common tongue that strikes,
And knows not what the hour is? or become
Thralls to the praise and bondmen to the blame
Of men by no tie blood-bound to our love,
To make our lives look in their foreign sight
Fair, lest they speak us evil? By my head,
No Scot I hold him, but a strange man's knave,
Whose spirit is shrunk or swollen by their breaths.
Argyle. Well, let the votes be given, and each man's doom
Affirm if in his true and equal mind
The charge be proven upon my lord, or no.
How go the voices?

Lindsay. By one-half their dooms
e lords here of the jury speak him
free
th clear acquittal of bloodguilti-
ness:
e-half is voiceless.
Argyle. He then is proclaimed
this high court not guilty, and the
charge
trial stands not good against him.
Sir,
e court upon this plea declares for
you,
u are found free of blood.
Bothwell. My noble lords,
ng proved thus in your judgments
clear of crime,
re on this door will I to-day set up
personal challenge in mine honor's
right
meet in arms, before what judge he
will,
nat gentleman soever undefamed
ll take upon him to confront my
cause.
their lewd mouths who threat, and
wear no sword,
ur judgment given to acquit me shall
abash
e malice it puts power into mine
arm
th might of right to baffle. Sirs,
good day.
it with ORMISTON *and his follow-
ers.*
rgyle. Break up the court: the
cause is judged.
Maxwell (*to* LINDSAY). Is judged?
now not of such seed what stem
will spring,
that fruit sour as gall and red as
blood.
men's false mouths must of this
judgment grow.
ould I saw less surely than I see.

SCENE VI. — THE HIGH STREET.

BURGESSES *and* PEOPLE.

First Citizen. What more of shame
is laid up for us? when
Heaven put forth a hand to touch
with fire
These naked sins, and shrivel? Have
you heard
What last lies bare for judgment?
Second Citizen. Why, the last
Is not this half-hour's shame: each
stroke each day
Strikes out a fresh one, that five minutes
old
Dies of the next forgotten. Yesterday
Some talk was of the challenge yet,
which now
No man casts thought on, though by
two good swords
Was battle proffered: by the stout
Laird first
Of Tullibardine, in that brother's name
Whom they for fear have taxed of
treason, so
To eschew his proof and peril; he
defies
The challenger to combat, and requires
England and France for judges of the
field
In person of their sovereigns; this re-
fused,
On such new plea as craven craft may
find,
With his queen's leave the ambassador
himself
Of England gladly with his own heart's
will
Would take the personal cause upon
him.
First Citizen. What!
Is it for fault of Scots to match and
mate
The pride in Bothwell swoln with inno-
cent blood
None but Sir William Drury may be
held
Worth his sword's wrath that walks by
night?
Third Citizen. Perchance
As for his queen he stands here deputy,
And for our own her champion opposite,
Afield with swords' play or abed with
lips',
They hold the match more equal.
Fourth Citizen. Nay, this news
Is gray of beard already; hear you not
How by this priestly parliament of
ours,
That to beguile us and for no good-will

Hath in the queen's name passed its act to affirm
God's present gospel stablished in this realm,
The murderer lives now twice absolved of blood,
And has by voice of prelates and of earls
The assize allowed for good that purged him first,
And shall be loosened of his marriage-bond
That twelve months since was tied? his brother-in-law
Shall have again his forfeit lands, and see
His sister from her married bed thrust out,
And stir no finger; then without more stay
Who sees not where the adulterer's foot shall climb,
And by what head his own be pillowed? Nay,
These papers hung against our walls by night
Are tongues that prophesy but truth; ye saw
That likeness of a hare enringed with swords,
And of a mermaid crowned with burning eyes
Who drove the hounds off with a two-thonged scourge
That coursed him trembling; and her hand indeed
Is found not slow to smite; a law now lives
Denouncing on his head no less than death
Who shall set up, or seeing shall pluck not down,
Such placards writ: the first soe'er who finds
And leaves the writing that defames her friend
To pass among the people, at her will
Shall lie in bonds; but if this brand herself,
Then must the man that spared it or that set
Die; so the fire-eyed queen of shipwreck sings
Death in their ears who sail this dangerous sea
Whereon the ship reels of our staggering state,
And with the flame shot from her eyes puts out
The light of theirs that were as lightnings turned
On her hare-hearted lover.

Third Citizen. Yet they lack
The power with boast or menace to seal up
The lips of poor men; but three days ago
As she rode through the Grassmarket I heard
How from their stalls the women cried on her,
God save your grace! but with this added word
That smote the smile upon her lips to death,
If ye be spotless of the dead king's blood.

Second Citizen. Such words and souls mount nigher God's ear and eye
Than theirs who lent this man their hands to slay
And tongues to purge him of their general sin, —
He of St. Andrew's, and his under priest,
Bishop of Ross, Leslies and Hamiltons,
Whose lips are bloody, and that double soul
Argyle, that steers their faction; and this crew
Masked here as mouthpiece of the loathing land
Must hide the people's heart and true men's truth
With craft of prattling prelates; yet such mouths
As are unlocked and locked again with gold
But gape till God shall pluck their tongues out.

Fifth Citizen. Yea,
Ye hear but this, and have to burn your ears
No hotter news of these men, or what bond
Bears written broad and brave such names as these

earls and bishops? this is strange
yet, sirs,
at fires my cheek to tell you?
Second Citizen. Why, men said
ere was a knot that met of these to
sup,
it in with Bothwell's hackbutters for
guard,
at drew round Ainslie's Tavern,
where they sat
e a strait hoop of steel to bind them
safe
d hold them fast from starting; and
some bond
these his guests at Bothwell's prayer
subscribed
ere was that bound them to him,
against all foes
at might impeach him of the crime
discharged
the open court's acquittal, from this
day
take his part upon them, and stand
fast
to their own cause, being made sub-
ject all
slander and suspicion that but grows
nonor and high credit held with kings:
much we heard, and found not
strange.
ifth Citizen. Nay, this
s but the grace that served their
banquet in
meats as strong as poison; there
ensued
ledge more mortal of a bond more
base;
sidering this time present, how the
queen
od husbandless, and how the gen-
eral weal
ht let her not long live so, should
her mind
thought of his true services be
moved
take the earl Bothwell to her loving
lord,
y and each man there met of them
should plight
honor, truth, and heart's fidelity
advance this marriage with all
furtherance given
counsel, satisfaction, and good help,
As soon as law might give it leave to
be,
And as their common enemy should
esteem
What man soever of evil will to them
Might seek its hinderance; and to this
were set
More than those names ye spake of;
be it for fear,
For craft or vantage, none of these fell
off
Save Eglinton that slipped for shame
away,
And Morton with the secretary, that
gave
Their voice yet for this marriage, but
would seal
No general bond of service on his side,
Save these, no priest or peer of them
but lives
His servant pledged; their hands,
tongues, counsels, hearts,
His or not theirs, and all they man
sworn men.
Third Citizen. I have assurance of a
true man's faith,
That word was writ of this confederacy
To the English council from the Laird
of Grange,
Desiring knowledge with what ear their
queen
Shall take these tidings; and albeit of
late,
In all our trouble being found slow to
help
She hath lost the love here borne her,
if her grace
For this late murder will pursue re-
venge,
She shall win all the hearts of all the
best
Again, he says, in Scotland; who should
be,
With her good help and favor, swift to
take
This vengeance on them, and redeem
from fear
Their prince's life now trembling in the
reach
Of hands that slew his father; for our
queen
Hath sworn she cares not for her lover's
sake

To lose France, England, and her natural land,
And would go with him to the wild world's end,
Stript to her smock, ere leave him.
Second Citizen. Has he writ
So much to the English court of her? being ours,
He should let shame keep silence of her shame.
First Citizen. What shame or silence can shut up for shame
That which at noon walks clamorous of itself
And boastful to be naked? They will wed,
Though thunder sound forth sin, and while God speaks
Will kiss in sight of lightning.
Fourth Citizen. Was there not
Some noise of strife arisen for fault of pay
Among their crew of Bothwell's villains here
That hold by force of hand the palace gates?
Second Citizen. Such rumor was, for certain; and himself
Strode in among the middle mutiny
Like a thieves' captain, and being braved of them
Caught by the throat one that was lord o' the brawl,
And would have slain but for the throng that cried
And drove upon him shouting, till for fear
He was even fain to stop with promises
Their mouths who clamored; which to see fulfilled
Needs must he sit no lower than doth a king.
Third Citizen. So then the gates are open, and the queen
By leave of these her guards, and him their chief,
May part in peace for Stirling now to see
Her son in ward there of the castellan?
Where we, God knows, may give him thanks that one
So wise as the earl of Mar and stout of heart
Hath our born king in covert, who might sleep
On that sweet breast that bore him not so safe
As in a hand so honest.
First Citizen. Ay, God help,
There is no surety in such housekeeping
As thunder comes forth of the sky by night
To fall upon and burn it, yet no storm
Save of men's making seen, nor fire in heaven
Save what rose up from under. Verily,
Our good lord Bothwell spake but truth, who said
To good James Melville, how so strange a thing
On earth was never known of: pity 'tis
He could not come to look upon the corpse,
Though Bothwell bade him, seeing it was removed;
It was his hapless chance to find it gone
And in safe keeping of some secret hand
That waited on it living; such things are:
The worse hap his. They say it had no wound;
So if by some mischance, as God forbid,
The prince were reft unluckily of life,
I think he should have none for eye to see
That might read evil.
Third Citizen. Who shall ride with her?
Second Citizen. Why, no great train, lest being within the walls
She take the child into her hand, and give
For better care to Bothwell's, with the keys
That keep this castle too; but yet I think
His hand nor hers shall put God's judgment back
That waits to take them triumphing, and turn
To tears their laughter and our grief to joy.

CENE VII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

The QUEEN *and* HUNTLEY.

ueen. Will you go back from us?
Iuntley. I like it not;
o not see how this may be made good.
ueen. There is no flaw but in your fainter heart;
way is fair and even; I cannot think
at seed is in men's hearts that brings forth fear
of all season. Why are you so sad?
thing is no more dangerous than it was
en our first plot was laid; nay, so much less
how much these are ours whose names and bonds
nk on our side inscribed.
Iuntley. Madam, not so;
earl of Sutherland, whose forfeiture
r grace but now remitted with mine now,
en we shall meet my brother's men in arms,
die before he yield you to their hands.
ueen. My lord, you have no brother of him now
was your sister's husband. I will write
oid him bring up men enough to out-match
hat ride with us homeward, and so far
none the hardiest shall but think on fight.
ee hundred hath your earl? then in his rank
re shall be more than of our company,
I to spare men's blood may yield myself.
Iuntley. It is too gross and foolishly devised;
n I spake last with him, he laid on you
charge to say where we should meet and when,
And what should by contrivance plead for me,
To save my name though you be yielded up
Who ride with me for escort; all this charge
He lays on you, and bids me write again
What you shall say by letter; of himself
He moves not yet; and I beseech you think,
Before you move him, in what enterprise
You put to pledge your honor, that can never
With honor wed him who being wedded man
By force and violent hand hath borne you off;
Nor will my folk endure it, I wot well,
But it must come to trial by hap of fight
With doubt and accident of answering arms:
Where, if we fail on our part, then on his
Shall be the blame and bloody note of war
Made on your personal guard; but if we win
That ride with you as followers, then is he
The most forlorn of men revolted; else,
I shall be called of all that sin on earth
The most unthankful traitor, who being now
But newly of your grace remade your man
Shall yield you up by treason without blows
Into a rebel's handling; and the lord's,
I doubt, when they shall see you in his hold,
Will think not much to unswear their oaths, deny
Their words and hands as given through force or fear,
And signed not of their hearts; I pray, think of it,
And take some other counsel to your mind.

Queen. My lord, if you bear back my word to him,
It shall be this: that, seeing I am come so far,
If of his own will he withdraw him not,
For no persuasion nor for death itself
Will I be brought to break my faith with him.
For this you say of them that follow you,
And of your fear to bear a thankless name
For my supposed betraying, you should by now
With him have taken counsel of the chance,
And not have thrown it here across my way,
Who have no choice to pass not over it,
Seeing I may turn not back for life or death,
For fear or shame or love of any man.
As for the place, he doth not well to cast
On me too even the election: let him choose,
And send me word, with pardon that herein
I tax my lord of too much negligence.
For those your followers whom you most misdoubt,
You shall be wise to weed our train of them
If any wise mean be to draw them forth.
This is my counsel, of a simple wit
And womanish, but not so vile at heart
As to go back for danger from its faith.
I pray you so report of me, and say,
When he shall ask you of my mind again,
No more but this word only: and farewell. [*Exit* HUNTLEY.
This faint-heart honesty with half a hand
Is falser found at need than falsehood's self,
And ever was of me more hated. Oh,
That I might take these hours as in my hand
And men that yet divide us, with one grasp
To gripe them dead and pluck his fang from time
That waits to fasten on us unawares
And make love mortal with the kiss that kills!
A day and night are as a long life's length
That part the hungering from the perfect hour,
The void from the fulfilling.—Nay, come in.

Enter MARY BEATON *and* PARIS.

Mary Beaton. Here waits my lord of Bothwell's messenger
To bear your word back of Lord Huntley's mind.

Queen. Ay, that I found it trustless. Tell my lord
He makes me mad to put his faith in him
And to mistrust that which is wholly his,
Even her true heart to whom he should have sent
Word every day what she should do for him,
And hath done nothing of it. I did say
He should take heed of that false brother-in-law,
Of whom his negligence and heedless faith
Have put us in the danger; on my part
There has lacked nothing toward the work in hand,
And had he not more changed his mind than I
Since I went from him, he should need not now
By stranger's lips inquire of my resolve.
Say how you see me, and till he send me word
That I will here lie sick, as God he knows
What health I have at heart. Would I were dead,
For all I see goes ill; but tell your lord
This was not in his promise that I find,
Nor no such matter; but he lets me see
What power has absence on him, to whose bow

is hand has yet another string than mine.
nd look you warn him of this brother-in-law
nat he hath babbled of our enterprise
herein he puts but forth a heartless hand,
nd in what great men's ears he well may guess
ho knows which most are dangerous; yet methinks
still we have need to flatter them, so much
ight naturally be pleaded on his part,
nat his good service and long amity
ight well deserve his pardon and their love
past a subject's duty he put forth,
ot to constrain me, but assure himself
such place nigh me that no foreign tongue
ay by strange counsel hinder my consent
that whereto he trusts his service shall
ake him one day to attain; with such excuse
all he persuade them that he stands compelled
make pursuit against his enemies:
nd he may find fair words at will to say
Maitland most of all, through whose keen tongue
e hold the rest by the ear; but if at last
ne deed of our device mislike him now,
t him send word, and leave not on my head
e blame of all; and if it like him yet,
y I beseech him for the honor of God
come with no less force accompanied
an of three hundred men; rather with more,
r that is all the main part of my care;
eing as for Huntley, I assure myself
in our play shall henceforth bear no part
But of an honest and a fearful man
Whose thought and all his toil of heart it is
To keep the load of treason from his name.
Therefore I would not have my lord in all
Trust or mistrust him, but be circumspect
And take more power unto him.

Paris. So shall I say;
Your highness hath no message more for me?

Queen. God wot no time it is for us to change
Tokens and toys of love; yet I would send,
For very sorrow, something but in sign
That of my heart's grief I accuse not him
For his cold writing or forgetfulness,
His little memory of me and little care,
And least of all his promise-breach, being now
So far made his that what thing pleases him
Is acceptable to me, and all my thoughts
To his so willingly subdued, that all
That comes of him proceeds of no such root,
In mine esteem, as loveless negligence
Nor any love's lack, but such only cause
As I desire, being just and reasonable,
Which is the final order he should take
For his own surety and honor, who alone
Is my life's stay for which I only will
Preserve it, and without which in this world
My soul desires not but a sudden death.
Bear therefore to him, for testimony of me,
How lowly I submit me to his law
In sign of homage this that I take off
Of my head's ornament, which is the chief
And guide of other members, as to say
How being possessed of that as of a spoil
Which is the principal, he needs must have

The remnant subject to him with heart's consent.
And for that heart, that seeing I have left it him
Long since I have not now in hand to give,
This stone instead I send him, painted black
And sown with tears and bones, a sepulchre
Whereto my heart is likened, being as it
Carved like a tomb or certain receptacle
To harbor his commandments in, and hold
More fast than all his memory and his name
Therein enclosed as in the ring my hair,
To come forth never till the grant of death
Shall let him rear a trophy of my bones,
As is the ring full of them, set therein
For sign he has made full conquest of my heart,
That even the bones must be to him bequeathed
For memory of his victory and my loss
That was so sweet to me: tell him but this,
And say that by the enamelling of black
He shall discern her steadfastness who sends
And by the tears my fears innumerable
Lest I displease him, and those tears I shed
For his dear absence and for heart's disdain
That I may not in outward shape be his
As with full strength and heart and spirit I am,
And with good cause; for were my merit more
Than hers of all born ever for men's love
Found worthiest and most perfect, and as much
As I desire it might be in his eye,
Well might I so rest ever, and shall strive
Still to maintain me in his government
As worthily as I may. Say, I beseech him
That is mine only good, in as good part
To take it at my hand as I at his
With extreme joy received our marriage bond,
That till the marriage of our bodies be
Made publicly shall part not from my breast,
Which keeps it now in sign of all the bliss
I can or hope for or desire on earth:
And that my letter here brake off for dread
Lest this as much should weary him to read
As I took joy to write it; therefore say,
Here did I set a kiss as on his hand
With such devotion as I pray to God
To give him long and blessed life, and me
That only good of all which I desire
And only may pretend to in the world,
His love and his good favor who doth hold
Alone my life up; and this trust I showed
To you in whom I know the trust he hath
As I shall for his sake whose wife I am,
His humble and obedient lawful wife,
To whom my heart and body are dedicate
And shall in no wise unto death be changed
Nor good nor evil make me go from it
So tell him, and despatch.

[*Exit* PARIS

What said Lord Ma
Touching the child's charge to you?

Mary Beaton. But thus much:
That he would never let it from his hand
Save with assent of the three severa states,
And on condition there shall be pro claimed
Some honest lord and worthy such charge
As captain of the castle of Edinburgh

Where only may the prince, he says, lie safe
From them that slew his father.
Queen. Ay, so brave?
Here speaks a man of trust, found honorable.
Had as lief be dead as see such men
Stand so at point to thwart me: by my life,
I hold it not a straw's worth in the scale
That I must live so shackled. What! and now,
When my life trembles on the top of fate,
And all my days hang from this edge of time
'Twixt night and light suspended, whence one hour
May hurl all hopes down breathless to the pit,
And cast me broken at the mountain's foot,
Or set me sure and steadfast in the sun,
To be so crossed of cozening honesties,
And honors made of craft, and fraudulent faith,
Would spur a blood more sluggish than my sleep
And prick a drowsier passion. Well, let be:
Our time will come to take all these in hand.
What may doubt deem, then, I would do with him,
What am his mother? Nay, I know their thought:
'Tis their fear and hatred of my lord
That glares askant on me; and the child's self,
I think, as little loves me as he need,
Knowing in what love I held his father. Come,
I will yet see, before I take my leave,
If there be such a nature in our blood
As can command and change the spiritual springs
And motions of our thought, advance or check
The pulse of purpose in the soul that moves
Our longings and our loathings to their end
By mere control and force unreasonable
Of motiveless compulsion; if such blind
And sensual chances of the stirring veins
That feed the heart of child or mother may
Divert and dull the mind's design, or turn
The conscience and the current of the will
From its full course and action. I believe,
Albeit I would not hurt the life I bare,
Nor shed its blood, it is not possible
Such love should live between my child and me,
Who know what source he came of more than mine,
And how that part of me once mixed therewith
Was sullied thence and shamed in mine own sight,
That loathes to look upon it, yet must see
In flesh and blood the record writ and sealed
As oft as I behold him: and you saw
He would not lie within mine arm, nor kiss,
But like a fox-cub scratched and strove, to be
Free of my hands again.
Mary Beaton. I see no need
In heaven or earth why you should love him.
Queen No?
They say such law there is to enforce such love
On either part: I know not; but I think
Love should but flower from seed of love, and this
Was but a tare sown timeless and in hate;
Yet so much am I mother in my mind,
That, be it for love or loathing, from my heart,
When I perforce commend him to that care
Which will not yield him naturally to mine,
Fain would I parting know if soon or late
Mine eyes shall turn upon that face again

Which out of me was moulded, and take note,
When each on each looks equal-eyed, and sees
His crown a shadow that makes mine a shade,
What king must this be, and what queen shall I.

SCENE VIII. — DUNBAR. A ROOM IN THE CASTLE.

MAITLAND *and* SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Melville. What, have you seen them since we came from horse?
How looks she now?
Maitland. Disquieted and strange;
And he so hot and high of mood, I think
We have no safeguard from him but in her;
And Huntley that at Stirling spake with me
Of this their counsel, and must now suspect
It was by me discovered to the lords,
Will turn perforce his fear of Bothwell's wrath
Into a sword to strike as straight as he
Even at my life, it may be; which her grace
Shall easilier from fear of them redeem
Than her own fame from evidence of men,
That seeing her prisoner see too if she came
By force or no, and led by heart or hand,
To bonds indeed or freedom.
Melville. Nay, myself
Was warned of him that rode in charge of me, —
The laird here of Blackadder, — how lord
Was of our lady's counsel; and but now
As they rode in I heard him swear, and laugh,
Who would soe'er or would not, in their spite,
Yea, though herself she would not with her will,
Yet should the queen perforce now wed with him.
Maitland. The deed has flushed his brain and blood like wine:
He is wroth and merry at once, as a man mad.
There will no good come of it.
Melville. Surely, sir,
Of such loose crafts there cannot: all this land
Will cry more loud upon her than on him
If she be known consenting.
Maitland. If she be!
How shall not all ears know it on earth that hear?
But two miles out of Edinburgh, at noon,
Accompanied of all her guard and us,
She, meeting in mid-road at Almond Bridge,
The unthought-on Bothwell at his horse-troop's head,
Who with twelve men lays hand upon her rein,
Yields herself to him for fear our blood be spilt,
Or theirs or ours, for tenderness of heart
Submits her to his violent masterdom,
Forbids our swords, ties up all hands with words,
And doglike follows hither at his hand
For pure surprise and suddenness of fear
That plucks the heart out of resistance; then,
Riding beneath the south wall of the town,
On show of summons to the castle sent
For help of us enforced thus of our foes,
We get but fire of guns charged full of sound
With hay stuffed in for powder; and God knows
Balfour knew naught of this, the governor,
Who was forewarned not first of their design,
How by no means to cross but further it
With forecast of his office; nay, all this
Was undevised, and on the sudden wrought

take her by swift stroke of simple hand;
d so astonied were we all, and so e castellan, and most of all the queen.
y, though the world be drunk with faith in lies,
ll God make this too gospel? From this day
ll she begin her ruin; with rent heart
ee the ways wherethrough her life shall lie,
d to what end; for never henceforth more
ll she get good or comfort of men's love,
power nor honor that a queen should have,
hap nor hope renewed in all her days.
has killed herself to take her kingdom off,
l give into strange keeping.

nter the QUEEN, BOTHWELL, *and* HUNTLEY.

othwell. Here he stands, —
s was the knave that was to baffle me:
shall die here.

luntley. I will not lose the part
sword should have in him: this hour and hand
ll cut off craft and danger. Stand, and die.

laitland. Is it the queen's will that pursues my life?
n let it strike, and end.

ueen. I charge you, hold!
ll not foully twice be forced of men
stand and stain mine eyes with sight of blood
d of a friend, and guiltless. Hold, I say!

othwell. Stand by, for I will slay him.

ueen. Slay me, then,
I will fling my body on their points
re your swords shall find him.
Hark you, sir, [*To* HUNTLEY.
ose father died my traitor in my sight:
ne hair perish of my servant's head,
You that had back your lands and goods but now
Again shall lose them with your forfeit life
For boot of this man's blood.

Bothwell. Woman, give way!

Queen. Give all your swords way toward me; let me bleed
Ere this my friend that has been true to me:
I swear he shall not.

Maitland. Madam, for God's love,
Come you not in their peril; I am armed,
If both not run upon me.

Bothwell. Fool, I say,
Give place, or I shall know not what I do;
Make me not mad.

Queen. I cannot fear you yet.
Will you strike now?

Bothwell. I should but do you right.
Why thrust you in between me and this man
Whom your heart knows for traitor, and whose tongue
Crossed and betrayed our counsel to the lords?
Had he his will, we should not stand to-day
Here heart to heart, but you in ward of them,
And I divided from you.

Queen. My sweet lord,
Let not your wrath confound my happiness;
Stain not my fair and fortunate hour with blood
Shed of a good man who shall serve us yet.
It shall more help to have him live our friend
Than fifty-fold slain of our enemies.

Bothwell. Have your will's way: he cannot cross us now;
I care not if he live.

Maitland. I am bounden to you
For so much grace.

Queen. Vex not his mood again.
To-morrow shall all friends be reconciled;
To-night rest here in surety.

Bothwell. Be it so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. — THE SAME.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, *and the* ARCHBISHOP *of* ST. ANDREW'S.

Queen. What counsel, father? if their league be made
So soon and strong at Stirling, we had need
Surely by this be fast in Edinburgh.
We have sent thither freely as our friends
Lord Huntley and James Melville, who were here
As in our ward, not prisoners; every day
Here lingering makes our enemies bitterer-tongued
And our strange state more hazardous; myself
More taxed for willing bondage, or my lord
For violence done upon me.
Archbishop. In my mind,
There is no mean of policy now but speed,
Nor surety but short counsel and stout heart.
The lords at Stirling, while you put off time,
Athol and Mar, and Morton with Argyle,
Are sworn to crown the prince, and of his name
Make to their cause a standard, if you cleave
Still to my lord here, from whose violent hand
With your own leave they fain would pluck you forth,
And keep your honor hurtless; but they see
You will have no deliverance at their hands
From him who, as they say, doth boast himself,
If he may get your child once in his ward,
To warrant him forever in good time
From all revenging of his father's death.
Nay, it is bruited of them all about
How you at parting would have given the boy
An apple poisoned, which he put awa
And dogs that ate it after swelled ar
died.
Bothwell. The devil is in their lips
had I free way,
Fire should seal up and sear them.
Archbishop. So they talk;
The very children's tongues are hot
you,
And in their plays your shadowy acti
staged
And phantoms raised of your presente
deed:
Boys that in Stirling streets had ma
their game
To act again the slaying of Darnley,
Were rapt with passion of the pastin
feigned
They well-nigh slew the player that to
on him
Your part, my lord, as murderer, a
came off
Half hanged indeed and breathles
this I hear,
And more much weightier daily fro
that part
Pointing the same way on you; sure
is,
From France and England messenge
desire
To have the prince delivered to th
charge
As to be fostered for his surety's sak
Of one or other, safelier so bestowed
In foreign harborage of a strang
court
Than at the rough breast of his na
ral land;
Such offer comes there of Elizabeth
To those unquiet lords, but other aid
They must of her not look for to th
part
Who stand against their sovereig
Now, since these
Are dangers evident, and every day
Puts more in them of dangerous, b
it were,
I think, to meet them warlike point
point,
Your hands and powers made one, a
multiplied
By mutual force and faith; or you m
part,

d each lose other, and yet be neither saved,
presently with one sole face confront e many-mouthed new menace of the time,
th divers heads deformed of enmities
at roar and ravin in the night of state
de dim with factions; only majesty,
th light of bared and kindled brows and eyes,
n face them to consume; do you but show
ur soul as high as is your crown, and power
plain as is your cause, you shall enforce,
resolution and a forthright will,
e obedience and the allowance of these men
at would constrain you by the fear of them
thin the limit of their leave. I say,
claim at once the fore-ordained divorce
ween his sometime lady and my lord,
d hard thereon your marriage, as compelled
perilous instance of necessity
once to assure you of a husband's help
d present strength in this your need, who stand
celess and forceless with no man for stay,
I could desire none truer and worthier trust
n him whose service done and valiant name
warrant your remission of such fault
men lay on him for the seeming force
h which unwillingly he stood constrained
save you even for love's sake from their hands,
ence, had not he redeemed you as by might,
y had done you worse wrong than he seemed to do.

This shall excuse the speed that you put on,
And leave their hands no time to rise that would
Prevent you, being unmarried; and your own,
Forestalling them, shall take again and steer
The helm of this land's general weal, else left
To their cross guidance and false pilotage.

Bothwell. By God, well said and counselled.

Queen. All is well,
Or shall, if but one thing be; and in you
That lies alone of all men. Nay, you know it:
Wrong me not now to ask.

Bothwell. Wrong you not me,
To cross my wit with riddles, which you know
From no man's lips I love.

Queen. I know not yet
If there be naught on any lips that live
Save mine that you love better: I can tell
Too little of your likings.

Bothwell. Be not wroth
That thus much of them I desire you learn,
And set your heart to it, once being schooled. Fair queen,
These are no chambering times, nor sit we here
To sing love's catches counter-changed with words
That cross and break in kisses: what you will,
Be swift to speak, or silent.

Queen. What I will?
I will be sure there hangs about your heart
No thought that bound it once to one cut off
And yet may feed it with desire to share
What is my treasure and my right to have
With her most undeserving; which in you
Were more than Jason's falsehood was, that gave

To his new wife such vantage of his old
As you give her of me, whose narrower heart
Holds not a third part of the faith and love
That my obedience bears you, though she wear
Against my will such vantage in your sight,
By my hard hap; yet would I think not so,
Nor liken you to such a trustless man
And miserable as he was, nor myself
To one so wronged a woman, and being wronged
In suffering so unpitiful as she.
Yet you put in me somewhat of her kind
That makes me like unto her in any thing
That touches you or may preserve you mine
To whom alone you appertain, if that
May be called mine by right appropriated
Which should be won through faithful travail, yea,
Through only loving of you as God knows
I do and shall do all my days of life
For pain or evil that can come thereof:
In recompense of which, and all those ills
You have been cause of to me, and must think
That I esteem no evils for your sake,
Let not this woman with her heartless tears
Nor piteous passion thrust me out of door,
Who should sit sole and secret in your heart.
What hath she borne, or I not borne, for you,
And would not bear again? or by what gift
Have I set store or spared it that might go
To buy your heart's love to me? Have I found
Empire, or love of friends, or pride, or peace,
Or honor, or safe life, or innocence,
Too good things to put from me; or men's wrath,
Terror or shame or hatred of mine own,
Or breach of friends, or kingdom's wreck, or sin,
Too fearful things to embrace and make them mine
With as good will and joyous height of heart
As hers who takes love in her prosperous arms
And has delight to bridegroom? Have I not
Loved all these for your sake? and those good things,
Have I not all abhorred them? Would I keep
One comfort or one harbor or one hope
One ransom, one resource, one resting place,
That might divide me from your danger, save
This head whose crown is humbled at your foot
From storm that smote on yours? Would I sleep warm
Out of the wind's way when your sail was set
By night against the sea-breach? Would I wait
As might your wife to hear of you, how went
The day that saw your battle, and hold off
Till the cry came of fallen or conquering men
To bid me mourn or triumph? Hath my heart
Place for one good thought bred not of your good,
Or ill thought not depending on you ill?
What hath she done, that yours hath place for her,
Or time or thought or pity?

Bothwell. What have I,
That yours should fix on her untimely Nay,
Last year she was my wife, and move you not;
And now she is turned forth naked of that name,

d stripped as 'twere to clothe you, comes this heat,
d fear takes fire lest she turn back, or I
thrust you forth instead · you are fair and fool
yond all queens and women.
Queen. There spake truth,
r then you said, most loving. But indeed
is irks me yet, this galls with doubt and fear,
at even her plea to be divorced from you
some forepast adulterous charge, — which proved
e wins her asking, — leaves your hand not loose
law to wed again, but your same deed
ees her from you, and fetters you from me.
en stand we shamed and profitless: meseems
d's very hand can loose not us and join,
ho binds and looses; though Buccleuch make oath
e was contracted to you first, and this
righteous marriage; though she plight her soul
she made proffer for our hope's sake; yea,
ough you should bring a hundred loves to swear
ey had the firstlings of your faith, who kept
faith with any, nor will keep with me,
d knows, and I, that have no warrant yet
my lord's word here which unweds you, being
tched with your cousin in the fourth degree,
d no proof published if the Church's grace
ere granted for it, or sought; no help of this,
your love give not warrant; and therein
she hath half or I have less than all,
Then have I nothing of you. — Speak to him ·
Bid him not break his faith, not this now mine;
Plead for me with him, father, lest he lie,
And I too lose him: God shall pardon, say,
What sin we do for love, or what for wrath,
Or to defend us from the danger of men,
But to me, — me, say, if he be forsworn,
That God shall forgive it him, nor I.
Archbishop. Be not too careful to confound yourself.
Those bonds are broken by God's leave and law:
Make no fresh bonds of your own fears, to do
What harm these do no more; he hath put her off:
Rest there content.
Queen. Nay, why should I then trust
He shall not put off me in heart for her?
Bothwell. Why, have your choice then, and mistrust: God's death!
I had deemed I had learnt of women's witlessness
Some little learning, yet I thought no more
Than that it was but light as air, snow, foam,
And all things light, not lighter. I would know
What men hold foolish yet that hold you wise,
If not your fear.
Queen. Doth she not love you?
Bothwell. Ay.
Queen. Hath she not cause to hate, and doth not hate,
Who sues to be put from you, for your fault
Craves leave to be cut off, as I crave leave
To take you from her hands, her gift?
Bothwell. God knows:
She may love, hate, or hate not neither love,
Or both alike: I know not.
Queen. But I know

That you can love not. Nay, then help me, God!
If I did know this, I would kill myself.
Yet to more proof I would I had put your heart,
Ere I gave up to it all the might of mine —
Which is but feebleness. Well, we will go;
There is no better counsel. Pardon me
If my fear seem to wrangle with my faith:
They are parts but of my love, that with itself
Strives to be master of its grief and joy
Lest either overbear it, and therewith
Put out my life. Come: all things shall be well.

SCENE X. — HOLYROOD.

Enter HERRIES *and* SIR JAMES MELVILLE.

Herries. Is the work done?
Melville. They are wedded fast; and now
I think would one of them to free herself
Give the right hand she hath given him.
Herries. What, so soon?
Came she as loath into the council-hall,
Or were her answers as compelled and strange?
Melville. I have not seen for any chance till now
So changed a woman in the face as she,
Saving with extreme sickness. She was wed
In her old mourning habits, and her face
As deadly as were they; the soft warm joy
That laughed in its fair feature, and put heart
In the eyes and gracious lips as to salute
All others' eyes with sweet regardfulness,
Looked as when winds have worn the white-rose leaf;
No fire between her eyelids, and no flower
In the April of her cheeks; their spring a-cold,
And but for want of very heart to weep
They had been rainier than they were forlorn.
Herries. And his new grace of Orkney?
Melville. The good duke
Was dumb while Adam Bothwell with grave lips
Set forth the scandal of his lewd life past
And fair faith of his present penitence
Whose days to come being higher than his past place
Should expiate those gone by, and their good works
Atone those evil: hardly twitched his eye,
Or twinkled half his thick lip's curve of hair,
Listening; but when the bishop made indeed
His large hard hand with hers so flower like fast,
He seemed as 'twere for pride and mighty heart
To swell and shine with passion, and his eye
To take into the fire of its red look
All dangers and all adverse things that might
Rise out of days unrisen, to burn them up
With its great heat of triumph; and the hand
Fastening on hers so griped it that her lips
Trembled, and turned to catch the smile from his,
As though her spirit had put its own life off,
And sense of joy or property of pain,
To close with his alone; but this twin smile
Was briefer than a flash or gust that strikes
And is not; for the next word was not said
Ere her face waned again to winter ward
As a moon smitten, and her answer came

words from dead men wickedly wrung forth
craft of wizards, forged and forceful breath
hich hangs on lips that loathe it.
Herries. Will you think
is was not haply but for show, to wear
e likeness as of one not all constrained
r all consenting, willingly enforced
do her will as of necessity?
at she might seem no part yet of his plot,
t as compelled by counsel of those lords
ho since her coming have subscribed by name
e paper of advice that in his cause
clares what force of friends has Bothwell here
Lothian and on all the border's march
keep good order, and how well it were
e should for surety wed him whom she needs
st wed for honor, or perforce live shamed
violence done upon her.
Melville. No: there hung
o much of fear and passion on her face
be put off when time shall be to unmask.
e fire that moved her, and the mounting will,
ile danger was and battle was to be,
w she hath leapt into the pit alive
win and wear the diamond, are no more:
pe feels the wounds upon its hands and feet
at clomb and clung, now halting since the hour
at should have crowned has bruised it. No, 'tis truth:
is heart-struck now, and labors with herself,
one that loves, and trusts not but the man
o makes so little of men's hate may make
Of women's love as little; with this doubt
New-born within her, fears that slept awake,
And shame's eyes open that were shut for love,
To see on earth all pity hurt to death
By her own hand, and no man's face her friend
If his be none for whom she casts them off,
And finds no strength against him in their hands.
Herries. Small strength indeed, or help of craft or force,
Must she now look for of them; and shall find,
I fear, no stay against men's spirits and tongues,
Nor shelter in the observance of their will
That she puts on, submitting her own faith
To the outward face of theirs, as in this act
Of marriage, and the judgment now enforced
Against the allowance of the mass, albeit
With a bruised heart and loathing did she bow
That royal head and hand imperious once
To give so much of her soul's trust away;
And little shall it stead her.
Melville. So fear I:
'Tis not the warrant of an act affirmed
Against the remnants of her faith, nor form
Of this strange wedlock, shall renew to her
Men's outworn love and service; nay, and strife
Lies closer to her than fears from outward: these
Whose swords and souls attend on her new lord,
Both now for fault of pay grown mutinous,
From flat revolt they hardly have redeemed
With the queen's jewels and that English gift

Of the gold font sent hither for the prince,
That served him not for christening, melted now
To feed base hands with gold, and stop loud throats,
Whose strength alone and clamor put such heart
In Bothwell, that he swore to hang the man
Who would not speak their banns at first, and now
But utters them with lips that yet protest
Of innocent blood and of adulterous bonds
By force proclaimed, and fraudful; and this Craig
The townsmen love, and heed not that for craft
Each day will Bothwell hear men preach, and show
To them that speak all favor, and will sit
A guest at burghers' boards unsummoned; yet
Men's hate more swells against him, to behold
How by the queen he rides unbonneted,
And she rebukes his too much courtesy;
So that their world within doors and without
Swells round them doubtfully toward storm, and sees
This hot-brained helmsman in his own conceit
Even here in port, who drifts indeed at sea.

Herries. Short time will wind this up: the secretary,
Whose blood the queen would see not shed of him,
Is slipped away for Stirling, there to join
With Lindsay and the lords ere this combined,
From whom I may not now divide myself,
On the child's party. Not a hand will stay
Nor heart upon this side; the Hamiltons,
For their own ends that set this marriage on,
Will for those ends with no sad hearts behold
At others' hands her imminent overthrow.

Melville. This was the archbishop's counsel, that annulled
Last year's true marriage to procure the queen's,
And even therein betray her. God mend all!
But I misdoubt me lest the sun be set
That looked upon the last of her good days.

Scene XI. — The Same.

The Queen *and* Bothwell; Mary Beaton *and* Arthur Erskine *in attendance.*

Queen. Are you yet wroth?

Bothwell. Are you yet wise? to know
If I be wroth, should less import than this
Which I would fain find of you.

Queen. By my life,
I think I am but wise enough to know
That witless I was ever.

Bothwell. Ay, but most,
You mean, to wed me, that am graceless more
Than witless you that wedded, in men's eyes
Who justliest judge of either; yet, by God,
Had I not grace enough to match with you,
I must have less than in their minds I have
And tongues of them that curse me. But what grief
Wrings now your heart or whets your tongue, that strikes
When the heart stirs not?

Queen. Nay, no grief it is
To be cut off from all men's company,
Watched like a thief lest he break ward by night,
My chamber-door set round with men-at-arms,
My steps and looks espied on, hands and feet
Fettered as 'twere with glances of strange eyes

at guard me lest I stray; my ways, my words,
very sleep, their subject.
Bothwell. You were wont
walk more free; I wot you have seen fair days
hen you lived large i' the sun, and had sweet tongues
sing with yours, and haply lips and eyes
make song sweeter than the lute may: now
s hard that you sit here my woful wife,
ao use you thus despitefully, that yet
s never queen so mated with a groom
d so mishandled: have you said so?
Queen. I?
Bothwell. Who hath put these words else in men's mouths, that prate
w you lie fast in prison? I did know woman's tongue keen as her faith was light,
faith so like the wind spake never yet
h tongue so like a sword's point.
Queen. No, my lord?
well that I should hear so first of you,
o best may know the truth of your worst word.
Bothwell. Is it no truth that men so speak, and you,
speech or silence or by change of face,
piteous eyes or angry, give them cause
babble of your bonds? What grace you show
vard others is as doubt and hate of me
hese our enemies' sight, who see it, and swear
are kept in ward here of my will, and made,
of no trust or love but force and fear,
all to my hand. Why, being but two days wed,
t there be cause between us of dispute
For such a thing as this man, in whose name
I am crossed and slighted of your wanton will?
Queen. If he be worth no more than you conceive,
What grace I do him can hurt you?
Bothwell. I conceive!
Why, what worth is he with you, that I should
Conceive the least thought of him? Were I hurt,
Assure yourself it would be to his death:
Lay that much to your heart.
Queen. My heart is killed.
I have not where to lay it.
Bothwell. Pray you, no tears.
I have seen you weep when dead men were alive,
That for your eye-drops wept their hearts' blood out:
So will not I. You have done me foolish wrong,
And haply cast your fame for food to hounds
Whose teeth will strip it hour by hour more bare
Whereon they have gnawed before.
Queen. What have I done?
Speak.
Bothwell. Nay, I will, because you know not. Hark:
You are even too simple and harmless; being man's wife,
Not now the first time, you should buy more wit
Though with less innocence; you have given a gift,
Out of your maiden singleness of soul
And eye most witless of misconstruing eyes,
Where you should not: this is strange truth to you,
But truth, God help us! that man's horse who was
Your husband, and whose chattels, place, and name
Lie in my hold I think now lawfully,
Whence none is like to wring them, have you given
Out of my hand to one of whom fame saith

That by the witness of a north-land witch
He when I die must wed you, and my life
Shall last not half a year; for in your bed
Must lie two husbands after me, and you
Shall in your fifth lord's lifetime die by fire.
Now, being but third and least in worth of these,
I would not have you die so red a death,
But keep you from all fresh or fiercer heat
Than of my lips and arms; for which things' sake
I am not blithe, so please you, to behold
How straight this lay lord abbot of Arbroath
Sits in your husband's saddle. Pardon me
That with my jealous knowledge I confound
Your virginal sweet ignorance of men's minds,
Ill thoughts and tongues unmannerly, that strike
At the pure heart which dreams not on such harm:
It is my love and care of your life's peace
Makes me thus venturous to wage words with you,
And put such troublous things in your fair mind,
Whereof God wot you knew not; and to end,
Take this much of me: live what life you may,
Or die what death, while I have part in you,
None shall have part with me; nor touch nor word,
Nor eye nor hand, nor writing, nor one thought,
The lightest that may hang upon a look,
Shall man get of you that I know not of,
And answer not upon him. Be you sure
I am not of such fool's mould cast in flesh
As royal-blooded husbands; being no king,
Nor kin of kings, but one that keep unarmed
My head but with my hand, and have no wit
To twitch you strings, and match you rhyme for rhyme,
And turn and twitter on a tripping tongue,
But so much wit to make my word and sword
Keep time and rhyme together, say and slay.
Set this down in such record as you list,
But keep it surer than you keep your mind
If that be changing; for by heaven and hell
I swear to keep the word I give you fast
As faith can hold it, that who thwarts me here,
Or comes across my will's way in my wife's,
Dies as a dog dies, doomless. Now, your pleasure:
I prate no more.

Queen. Shall I be handled thus?

Bothwell. You have too much been handled otherwise:
Now will I keep you from men's hands in mine,
Or lack the use of these.

Queen. What, to strike me?
You shall not need: give me a knife to strike,
That I may let my life out in his eye,
Or I will drown myself.

Bothwell. Why, choose again:
I cross you not.

Queen. Give me a knife, I say.

Arthur Erskine. Make not our hearts bleed, madam, as they burn
To hear what we hear silent.

Bothwell. Comfort her:
You were her chamber-knight on David's day.

Arthur Erskine. My lord, the reverence that the queen's sight bears,
And awe toward her, make me thus slow to set

hand to do what work my heart bids; else
ould not doubt to stand before your grace,
d make such answer as her servant may.
Queen. Forbear him, Arthur: nay, and me; 'tis I
whom all strokes first fall and sorest smite,
o most of all am shieldless, without stay,
d look for no man's comfort. — Pray you, sir,
t be in your will that I cast off
s heavy life to lighten your life's load
t now with mine is laden, let me die
re queenlike than this dog's death you denounce
inst the man that falls into your hate;
ugh not for love, yet shame, because I was
queen that loved you: else you should not seem
royal in her sight whose eyes you serve,
she when I am dead with such high heart
old you, nor with such glad lips commend
conqueror of me slain for her love's sake
l servant of her living in your love.
me die therefore queenlike, and your sword
ke where your tongue hath struck; though not so deep,
hall suffice to cleave my heart and end.
othwell. Hear you, my queen: if we twain be one flesh,
ll not have this daintier part of it
n any timeless hand against itself
urt me, nor this fire which is your tongue
t any flame on me: no fuel am I
urn and feed you; not a spark you shed
ll kindle me to ruin, but with my foot
Rather will I tread out the light that was
A firebrand for the death of many a man
To light the pile whereon they burnt alive.
What! have I taken it in my hand to scorch
And not to light me? or hath it set fire
To so few lives already, that who bears
Needs not to watch it warily and wake
When the night falls about him? Nay, the man
Were twice the fool that these your dead men were,
Who seeing as I have seen and in his hand
Holding the fire I carry through the dark
To be the beacon of my travelling days,
And shine upon them ended, should not walk
With feet and eyes both heedful at what hour,
By what light's leading, on what ground he goes,
And toward what end. Be therefore you content
To keep your flame's heat for your enemies' bale,
And for your friend that large and liberal light
That gave itself too freely, shot too far,
Till it was closed as in a lantern up
To make my path plain to me; which once lost,
The light goes out forever.
Queen. Yea, I know;
My life can be but light now to your life,
And of no service else; or, if none there,
Even as you say, must needs be quenched; and would
The wind that now beats on it and the sea
Had quenched it ere your breath, and I gone out
With no man's blood behind me!
Bothwell. Come, be wise:
Our sun is not yet sunken.

Queen. No, not yet:
The sky must even wax redder than it is
When that shall sink; darkness and smoke of hell,
Clouds that rain blood, and blast of winds that wreck,
Shall be about it setting.
Bothwell. What! your heart
Fails you now first that shrank not when a man's
Might well at need have failed him?
Queen. Ay, and no;
It is the heart that fired me, fails my heart;
And as that bows beneath it, so doth mine
Bend, and will break so surely.
Bothwell. Nay, not mine:
There is not weight yet on our adverse part,
Fear not, to bend it.
Queen. Yet it fails me now.
I have leant too much my whole life's weight on it
With all my soul's strength, and beneath the fraught
I hear it split and sunder. Let me rest:
I would fain sleep a space now. Who goes there?
Mary Beaton. A suitor to behold your majesty.
Queen. I will not see him. Who should make suit to me?
Who moves yet in this world so miserable
That I can comfort? or what hand so weak
It should be now my suppliant, or uplift
In prayer for help's sake to lay hold on mine?
What am I to give aid or alms, who have
Nor alms nor aid at hand of them to whom
I gave not some but all part of myself?
I will not see him.
Mary Beaton. It is a woman.
Queen. Ay?
But yet I think no queen; and cannot be
But therefore happier and more stron
than I.
Yet I will see what woman's face fo
grief
Comes to seek help at mine; if she b
mad,
Me may she teach to lose my wits an
woes,
And live more enviable than ye that ye
Have wit to know me wretched.
Enter JANE GORDON.
Who is this
Are you my suitor?
Jane Gordon. I am she that was
Countess of Bothwell: now my nam
again
Is that my father gave me.
Queen. Ay, no more;
You are daughter yet and sister t
great earls,
And bear that honor blameless; be
enough;
And tell me wherefore by that nam
you come,
And with what suit, before me.
Jane Gordon. Even but this:
To look once on you, and to bid far
well,
Ere I fare forth from sight.
Queen. Farewell; and yet
I know not who should in this worl
fare well.
Is the word said?
Jane Gordon. A little leave at last
I pray you give me: that I seek not
For love or envy toward my sometim
lord,
Or heart toward you disloyal now m
queen,
Let me not plead uncredited. I came
Surely with no good hope to no gla
end,
But with no thought so vile of will a
this,
To thrust between your hearts the ca
of me,
Claim right or challenge pity, melt
fret
Your eyes with forced compassion:
did think
To have kissed your hand, and som
thing said for sign

ıd come not of weak heart or evil will,
in good faith, to see how strong in love
y stand whose joy makes joyless all my life,
ose loving leaves it loveless, and their wealth
ls full upon my famine. Be not wroth:
eak not to rebuke you of my want,
of my loss reprove you, that you take
crown of love to gild your crown of gold;
ıow what right you have, and take no shame
sit for your sake humbled, who being born
oor mean woman would not less have been
God's grace royal, and by visible seal
ıtural queen of women; but being crowned
make the throne imperial, and your hand
power into the sceptre; yea, this head
ts gold circlet takes not majesty,
gives it of its own; this may men see,
I deny not; nor is this but just,
I, who have no such honor born or given,
ıld have not either, if it please you not,
which I thought I had; the name I wore,
hand scarce yet a year since laid in mine,
eye that burned on mine as on a wife's,
lip that swore me faith, the heart that held
hought or throb wherein I had no part,
eaved but with a traitor's breath, and beat
ı pulse but of a liar.
thwell. Ay, swore I so?
, this was truth last year then.
ieen. Truth, my lord?
What does the fire of such a word as this
Between such lips but burn them, as mine ears
Burn that must hear by your device and hers
With what strange flatteries on her prompted lips
This dame unwedded lifts her hand unringed
To abash me with its show of faith, and make
Your wife ashamed at sight of such a love
As yet she bears you that is not your wife?
Bothwell. What devil should prick me to such empty proof
And pride unprofitable? I pray you think
I am no such boy to boast of such a spoil
As chamberers make their brag of. Let her speak,
And part not as unfriends.
Queen. Madam, and you
That thus renumber and resound his vows,
To what good end I know not, in our ear, —
What would you have of him whom your own will
Rose up to plead against as false, to break
His bonds that irked you, and unspeak the word
That held you hand in hand? Did you not pray
To be set free from bondage, and now turn
To question with the hand that you put off
If it did well to loose you?
Jane Gordon. Truly, no;
Nor will I question with your grace in this,
Whether by mine own will and uncompelled
I only would have put that hand away
That I will say would yet have held mine fast
But for my frowardness and rancorous mind;

Let all this even be so; as he shall say
Who will say naught but with your queenly will,
Why, so will I. Yet ere I am gone, my lord, —
Oh, not my lord, but hers whose thrall am I, —
My sometime friend and yet not enemy,
If this thing not offend you, that I crave
So much breath of you as may do me right,
I pray you witness for me how far forth
And for what love's sake I took part with you,
Or gave consent to our devised divorce,
And if this were for hate; for you should know
How much of old time I have hated you,
How bitter made my heart, what jealous edge
Set on mine envy toward you: spare not then
To say if out of cold or cankered heart
I sought, or yielded shamefully for spite,
To be divided from you. Nay, forbear;
Speak not, nor frown on me; you cannot say
I was your loveless or disloyal wife,
Or in my void bed on disconsolate nights
Sought comfort but of tears: nor that I held
Mine honor hurt of that which bruised my heart,
And grudged to help you to mine own most wrong,
And lend you mine own hand to smite myself,
And make you by mine own mouth quit of me.
This that I did, and wherefore I did this,
And if for love's or hate's sake, verily
You shall not say you know not, and the queen
Shall blame me not to put you yet in mind,
Nor think it much that I make record here
Of this that was between us: wherefore now
I take no shame at this my leave-taking
To part as one that has not erred herein,
To love too little; this shall not be said
When one bethinks him such a woman was,
That with poor spirit or with contracted heart
I gave myself to love you, or was found
Too mean of mind or sparing of my soul
To cast for love the crown of love away,
And when you bade refuse you for my lord,
Whom, had you bidden, with my whole heart's blood
I had thought not much to purchase for my love:
But seeing nor blood nor all my body's tears
Might buy you back to love me, I was fain
That you should take them and my very life
To buy new love and life with. Sir, and now
Ere we twain part —

Queen. What! are ye parted not?
Between his lover and my lord I stand,
And see them weep and wrangle ere they part,
And hold my peace for pity!

Jane Gordon. God shall judge
If with pure heart and patience, or with soul
That burns and pines, I would have said farewell:
I crave but this much of your grace and God's, —
Make me at last not angry.

Queen. Have you held
No counsel or communion with my lord
Since — I am shamed that take upon my lips
Such inquisition. If you have aught yet, speak;
I bid not nor forbid you.

Jane Gordon. Naught but this, —
To unpledge my faith, unplight my love, and so

Set on his hand the seal by touch of mine
That sunders us.
Queen. You shall not take his hand.
Jane Gordon. I think not ever then to touch it more,
Nor now desire, who have seen with eyes more sad
More than I thought with sorrowing eyes to see
When I came hither: so this long last time
Farewell, my lord; and you, his queen, farewell. [*Exit.*
Queen. Hath she made end? *While I have part in you,*
None shall have part with me; was this my lord,
Was this not you that said so?
Bothwell. Come, enough:
I am bound not to be baited of your tongues.
Queen. Bid her come back.
Bothwell. What! are you foolish? think
You twain shall look in either's eyes no more.
Queen. Why should I look in yours to find her there?
For there she sits as in a mirror shown
By the love's light enkindled from your heart,
That flashed but on me like a fen-fire lit
To lure me to my grave's edge, whence I fall
Deep as the pit of hell; but yet for shame
Deny not her to me as me to her,
He that have known this ever, but lacked heart
To put the thing to use I knew; and now
For both our sakes who have loved you, play not false
But with one love at once; take up your love
And wear it as a garland in men's sight,
For it becomes you: if you love me not,
You have lied by this enough; speak truth, shake hands,
Lose hearts, and leave me.

Bothwell. Vex not me too long,
Vexing your own heart thus with vanity;
Take up your wisdom that you have at will,
And wear it as a sword in danger's sight
That now looks hard upon us. Mine you are,
Love me or love not, trust me not or trust,
As yours am I; and even as I in you,
Have faith in me, no less nor further: then
We shall have trust enough on either part
To build a wall about us at whose foot
That sea of iron swayed by winds of war
Shall break in foam like blood; and hurled once back,
The hearts and swords of all our enemies fallen
Lie where they fell forever. Know but this,
And care not what is unknown else: we twain
Have wrought not out this fortune that we have,
Nor made us way to such an hour and power,
To let men take and break it, while as fools
We kiss and brawl and cry and kiss again,
And wot not when they smite. For these next days,
We will behold the triumph held at Leith
And pageant of a sea-fight as set forth
With open face and spirit of joyousness,
To fix this faith in all men's eyes and minds,
That while life lives we stand indissoluble:
Then shall you send out for your child again
Forth of Lord Mar's good keeping, that your heart
May here have comfort in his present sight;

So shall all these who make his name their sword
Lie weaponless within our hand and hold,
Who are drawn in one against us, or prepare,
While we delay, for Stirling; where by this,
I am certified on faith of trusty men,
Argyle is met with Morton, our good friends
That served us for their turn, with some that helped
To make our match and some that would have marred,
Once several-souled, now in their envies one,
As Lindsay, Athol, Herries; and to these
Maitland is fled, your friend that must not bleed,
Your counsellor is stolen away and lives
To whet his wit against you; but myself,
When we have shown us to the people, and seen
What eye they turn upon our marriage feast,
Will ride to Melrose, and raise up from sleep
Their hardy hearts whom now mine unfriends there
Hold in subjection; Herries nor Lord Hume
Nor Maxwell shall have power to tie them up
When I shall bid them forth, and all the march
Shall rise beneath us as with swell o' the sea
And wash of thickening waters when the wind
Makes the sea's heart leap with such might of joy
As hurls its waves together; there shall we
Ride on their backs as warriors, and our ship
Dance high toward harbor. Put but on the spirit
You had in all times that beset your peace,
Since you came home, with danger; in those wars
That made the first years clamorous of your reign,
And in this past and perilous year of ours
Where you lacked never heart. Be seen again
The royal thing men saw you; these your friends
Shall look more friendly on our wedded faith
Seeing no more discord of our days to be,
And our bold borderers with one heart on fire
Burn in your warlike safeguard, once to strike
And end all enemies' quarrel. When we part,
At Borthwick Castle shall you look for me,
Where I will gather friends more fain of fight
Than all our foes may muster.

Queen. Sir, so be it;
But now my heart is lower than once it was,
And will not sit, I think, again so high,
Though my days turn more prosperous than I deem.
But let that be. — Come, friends, and look not sad
Though I look sadder; make what cheer we may,
For festival or fight, or shine or shower,
I will not fail you yet. God give me heart,
That never so much lacked it! yea, he shall,
Or I will make it out of mine own fears,
And with my feebleness increase my force,
And build my hope the higher that joy lies low
Till all be lost and won. — Lead you, my lord,
And fear not but I follow: I have wept
When I should laugh, and laughed when I should weep,
And now live humbler than I thought to be;

ask not of your love, but of mine own
have yet left to give. Come, we will see
hese pageants or these enemies; my heart
hall look alike on either. Be not wroth;
will be merry while I live, and die
Vhen I have leave. My spirit is sick: would God
Ve were now met at Borthwick, with men's spears
nd noise of friends about us; friend or foe,
care not whether; here I am sore at heart,
s one that cannot wholly wake nor sleep
ill death receive or life reprieve me. Come;
Ve should be glad now: let the world take note
Ve are glad in spite and sight of enmities
hat are but worth the hour they take to quell.

SCENE XII. — STIRLING CASTLE.

MAITLAND *and* LINDSAY.

Lindsay. Is there such breach between them? why, men said,
Vhen they would ride through Edinburgh, and he
areheaded at her bridle, she would take
y force and thrust his cap upon his head
Vith loving might and laughing; and at Leith
hey saw the false fight on the waters join,
nd mid-May pageants that shone down the sun,
s with glad eyes of lovers newly wed
Vhose hearts were of the revel; and so soon
re hearts and eyes divided?

Maitland. Not an hour
ay she draw breath but in his eye, nor see
ut whom he shall give entrance; in her sight
He thought to have slain me, but she came between,
And set for shield her bosom to his sword
In her own chamber: so each day and night
By violent act or viler word than deed
He turns her eyes to water-springs of tears,
Who leaves not yet to love him; such strong hold
By flesh or spirit or either made one fire
Hath such men's love on women made as she.
For no foul speech, I think, nor strokes nor shame
Would she go from him, but to keep him fast
Would burn the world with fire; and no force less
Shall burn their bonds in sunder.

Lindsay. We will bring
And kindle it in their sight. They are southward fled
To meet at Borthwick: thither we design,
To raise the Merse with Hume, and with Lord Mar
And with the Douglas' following bind them round,
And take them in one snare, whence one of these
Shall creep not forth with life or limb that feels
No hound's fang fasten on it; and his mate
Shall see their feet smoke with his slaughtered blood.

SCENE XIII. — BORTHWICK CASTLE.

The QUEEN *and* BOTHWELL; MARY BEATON *in attendance.*

Queen. You should be hence again: since you came in
From Melrose with no levies at your back,
We have heard no news of friends, and hear but now
That we are ringed with Morton's folk about;
How shall he not have laid unhappy hand

Upon your messenger that bare our word
Of summons to the archbishop and your friend
Balfour to be with Huntley at our side?
Bothwell. Ay, he is trapped that bore my letters hence,
I doubt not; none have feet to run aright,
Eyes to see true, hands to bring help, but they
That move them to our ruin. This Balfour,
Whom I laid trust on since our fiery night
As on a true man bound of force to me,
Has fallen in conference and device of plots,
I hear, with that lean limb of policy
That loves me not, James Melville, by whose mouth
Being warned I meant to take out of his hand
The castle-keys of Edinburgh, and give
To one my closer kinsman for more trust.
He has made him friends of ancient foes, and seeks,
By no less service than pursuit of them
Who slew the king your husband, to deserve
Their favor who are risen of honest heart
But to chastise these slayers, of whom God wot
Themselves were none, nor he that hunts with them
Upon the trail of treason. Oh, your lords
Are worthy friends and enemies, and their tongues
As trusty as their hands are innocent,
When they see time to turn.
Queen. I would their lives
Lay all between my lips, and with one breath
I might cut all theirs off! nor tongue nor hand
Should rise of them against us, to deny
Their work disclaimed when done. What slaves are these
That make their hands red with men's secret blood,
And with their tongues would lick them white, and wash
The sanguine grain out with false froth of words
From lying lips that kissed the dead to death,
And now cry vengeance for him? But, my lord,
Make you haste hence to-night ere they be here
That if we tarry will beset us; I
Should hang but as a fetter on your foot,
Which should pass free forth to Dunbar, and raise
With sound even of its tread and forward speed
The force of all the border.
Bothwell. Where I go,
There shall you not be far to find: to-night
I will sleep here.
Queen. God give you rest and strength,
To make that heart which is the lord of mine
Fresh as the spirit of sunrise! for last night
You slept not well.
Bothwell. No; I had dreams, that am
No natural dreamer; I will sleep apart,
With Cranston's son to lie at hand, or wait
If I lack service.
Queen. Nay, let me be there:
I will not weary you with speech, nor break
Your sleep with servile and officious watch,
But sit and keep it as a jewel is kept
That is more dear than eyesight to its lord,
Or as mine eyes can keep not now their own,
Now slumber sits far from them. Let me wake.
Bothwell. No, not with me.
Queen. What, lest I trouble you?
Should my being there put dreams in you again,
To cross your sleep with me?
Bothwell. Belike it might.

Queen Nay, I was no part of your dreams, I think;
You dream not on me waking nor asleep,
But if you dream on no face else nor mine,
I will be yet content.
Bothwell. Well, so it was,
I dreamt at once of either; yet I know not
Why I should tell my dream. Your lord that was,
They say, would prattle of his fears by night
And faces of false peril: I was never
So loath by day to face what fear I might
As to be sick in darkness; but this dream
I would not see again. Yet was it naught;
I seemed to stand between two gulfs of sea
On a dark strait of rock, and at my foot
The ship that bore me broken; and there came
Out of the waves' breach crying of broken men
And sound of splintering planks, and all the hull
Shattered and strewn in pieces; and my head
Was as my feet and hands, bare, and the storm
Blew hard with all its heart upon me; then
Came you, a face with weeping eyes, and hair
Half glimmering with a broken crown that shone
Red as of molten iron; but your limbs
Were swathed about and shrouded out of sight,
Or shown but as things shapeless that the bier
Shows ready for the grave; only the head
Floated, with eyes fast on me, and beneath
A bloodlike thread dividing the bare throat
As with a needle's breadth, but all below
Was muffled as with cerecloths; and the eyes
Wept; then came one we wot of, clad in black,
And smiling, and laid hands on me more cold
Than is a snake's kiss or the grave's, and thrust
Between that severed head, weeping and crowned,
That mourned upon me, and mine eyes that watched,
Her own strange head wrapped widow-like and wan
In habit of one sorrowing, but with lips
That laughed to kiss me; and therewith at once
Your face as water flowed out of my sight,
And on mine own I felt as drops of blood
Falling, but if your tears they were, or hers,
Or either's blood, I knew not; on mine eyes
The great dead night shut doorwise like a wall,
And in mine ears there sprang a noise of chains,
And teeth ground hard of prison-grates that jarred
And split as 'twere with sound my heart, which was
As ice that cleaves in sunder: for there came
Through that black breathless air an iron note
Of locks that shut and sounded, and being dumb
There left me quick entombed in stone, and hid
Too deep for the day's eyeshot; then I woke
With the sea's roaring and the wind's by night
Fresh in my sense, and on my travailing heart
A weight of walls and floors and upper earth
That held me down below the breach o' the sea
Where its tide's wash kept witness overhead

How went the scornful days and nights above,
Where men forgot me, and the living sun
As a dead dog passed over.
Queen. What, alone?
She went not with you living underground
To sit in chains and hear the sea break? Nay,
She would not cast you off. This was your love, —
Your love of her and need of her sweet sight,
That brought her so upon your sleep, and made
Your sense so fearful of all things but this,
And all else heard and seen so terrible
But her face only: she should comfort you,
Whom I should bring to wreck; why, so she said,
Saying how she had loved you whom I loved not; yea,
Her eyes were sad, she said, that saw forsooth
So little love between us: this sweet word,
This word of hers at parting, this it was
Of which your dream was fashioned, to give sign
How firm she sits and fast yet in your heart,
Where I was never.
Bothwell. Well, how be it soe'er,
I would not dream again this dead dream out
For less than kingly waking: so good night,
For I will sleep alone.
Queen. No, with my heart,
That lies down with you though it sleeps not. Go,
And dream of no less loving prayer than mine
That calls on God for sleep to comfort you,
And keep your heart from sense of aught more hard
Than her great love who made it.

[*Exit* BOTHWELL.

'Tis a night
That puts our France into my mind: even here
By those warm stars a man might call it June,
Were such nights many; their same flower-bright eyes
Look not more fair on Paris, that mine own
Again shall hardly look on. Is it not strange
That in this gray land and these grievous hours
I should so find my spirit and soul transformed
And fallen in love with pain, my heart that was
Changed and made humble to his loveless words
And force as of a master? By my faith,
That was till now fixed never, and made as fire
To stand a sunlike star in love's live heaven, —
A heaven found one in hue and heat with hell, —
I had rather be mis-handled as I am
Of this first man that ever bound me fast,
Than worshipped through the world with breaking hearts
That gave their blood for worship. I am glad
He sometime should misuse me; else I think
I had not known if I could love or no.
If you could love man with my heart as now,
You would not mock nor marvel.
Mary Beaton. No, not then.
Queen. It is not in your heart: there lies not power
In you to be for evil end or good
The strange thing that is I.
Mary Beaton. There does not, no,
Nor can lie ever: could I love at all,
It were but as mean women, meanly; so
I do the best to love not.
Queen. Hark! what noise?
Look forth and see.

Mary Beaton. A sound of men and steeds;
The ring is round us; hark, the cry of Hume,
There Lindsay, and there Mar!
Queen. Call up my lord:
I will not go to vex him; but do you
Haste and awake them.
[*Exit* MARY BEATON.
Be it not in mine eyes
That he first sees death risen upon his sleep,
If we must die; being started out of rest,
If he should curse me, were my heart not slain
With the opening of his eyes in wrath on mine?
Re-enter MARY BEATON.
Mary Beaton. My lord is raised and fled; but in the press
The lord of Cranston's son that slept with him
Is fallen by flight into the enemy's hands,
Who cry out for him yet as hounds that quest,
And roar as on their quarry.
Queen. Fled, and safe?
Mary Beaton. Ay, past their hands' reach that had rent him else;
Be sure he is forth, and free, or you should hear
More triumph in these cries.
Queen. God, thou art good!
Fling wide the window: I will know of them
If they be come to slay me. — What, my lords!
Are all these men of mine that throng by night
To make such show of service, and present
Strange offices of duty? Where are ye
That are chief ushers to their turbulent love
Who come thus riotously to proffer it?
Which is first here? a bold man should he be
That takes unbidden on him such desert —
Let me not say, a traitor.
Lindsay (*without*). Where is he,
The traitor that we seek? for here is none
But in your bosom.
Queen. Here then ends your search,
For here am I; and traitors near enough
I see to pierce the bosom that they seek,
Where never shall be treason till its blood
Be spilt by hands of traitors that till now
Durst never rise so near it.
Lindsay. Give him forth,
Or we will have these walls down.
Queen. What, with words?
Is there such blast of trumpets in your breath
As shook the towers down of the foes of God
At the seventh sounding? yet we stand and laugh
That hear such brave breath blown and stormlike speech
Fly round our ears: is it because your war,
My lords, is waged with women, that ye make
Such woman's war on us?
Mar (*without*). Madam, we come
To take you from his hand that is your shame,
And on his shameful head revenge that blood
Which was shed guiltless; hither was he fled,
We know, into your shelter: yield him up,
Ere yet worse come than what hath worst come yet
Queen. There is none here to die by you but I,
And none to mock you dying. Take all your swords;
It is a woman that they came to slay,
And that contemns them: go not back for fear;
Pluck up your hearts; one valiant stroke or twain,
And ye are perfect of your work, and I
Forever quit of treason; and I swear,
By God's and by his mother's name and mine,

Except ye slay me presently, to have
Such vengeance of you and my traitors all
As the loud world shall ring with; so to-night
Be counselled, and prevent me, that am here
Yet in your hands; if ye dare slay me not,
Ye are dead now here already in my doom:
Take heart, and live to mock it.
Mar. He is fled.
Here boots us not to tarry, nor change words
With her that hath such vantage as to know
We have missed our prize and purpose here, which was
To take the traitor that is fled, and bring
Whither we now ride foiled, to Edinburgh,
Thence to return upon them.
Lindsay. Hear yet once:
You, madam, till our day be set of doom,
Look to the adulterer's head that hence is flown,
Whose shame should now stand redder in your face
Than blushes on his hand your husband's blood,
And cleave more fast; for that dead lord's revenge
Will we make proclamation, and raise up
The streets and stones for vengeance of your town
That sits yet sullied with bloodguiltiness
Till judgment make it clean; whose walls to-night
Myself, for fault of better, ere I sleep
Will scale though gates be fastened, and therein
Bring back and stablish justice that shall be
A memory to the world and unborn men
Of murder and adultery.
Queen. Good my lord,
We thank you for the care you have and pains
To speak before you smite; and that so long
The deed can follow not on the swift word
For lack of spirit and breath to mate with it;
So that they know who hear your threat betimes
What fear it bears and danger, and for fear
Take counsel to forestall it. Make good speed;
For if your steed be shod but with fleet speech,
Ere you shall stride the wall of our good town
Its foot may trip upon a traitor's grave.
Mary Beaton. They ride fast yet: hear you their starting cry?
Queen. For each vile word and venomous breath of theirs,
I will desire at my lord's hand a head
When he shall bring them bound before my foot.
If thou hast counsel in thee, serve me now:
I must be forth, and masked in such close wise
As may convey me secret to his side
Whence till our wars be done I will not part
Nor then in peace forever: in this shape
I should ride liable to all eyes and hands
That might waylay me flying; but I will play
As in a masque for pastime, and put on
A horseboy's habit, or some meaner man's
That wears but servant's steel upon his thigh
And on his sleeve the badge but of a groom,
And so pass noteless through toward Haddington,
Whither my lord had mind to flee at need,
And there expect me. Come: the night wears out;
The shifting wind is sharper than it was,

And the stars falter. Help me to put off
This outward coil of woman; my heart beats
Fast as for fear a coward's might beat, for joy
That spurs it forth by night on warriors' ways,
And stings it with sharp hope to find his face
That shall look loving on me, and with smiles
Mock the false form and cheer the constant heart
That for his love's sake would be man's indeed.

ACT IV. — JOHN KNOX.

Time: June 15 and 16, 1567.

SCENE I. — CARBERRY HILL.

The QUEEN, BOTHWELL, *and* SOLDIERS.

Queen. I would this field where fate and we must cross
Were other than it is; but for this thought,
On what ill night some score of years ago
Here lay our enemy's force before that fight
Which made next day the face of Scotland red,
And trod her strength down under English feet,
I would not shrink in this wide eye of dawn,
In the fair front of such a summer's day,
To meet the mailed face of my traitors' host
And with bared brows outbrave it.

Bothwell. Keep that heart,
For fear we need it. Look beyond the bridge
There at this hill's foot on the western bank,
How strong they stand under the gathering light:
I have not seen a battle fairer set
Or in French fields, or these our thirstier lands
That feed unslaked on blood.

Queen. They grow now green, —
These hills and meadows that with slain men's lives
Have fed the flocks of war; come ten years yet,
And, though this day should drench them with more death
Than that day's battle, not a stain shall stand
On their fresh face for witness. Had God pleased
To set a strong man armed with hands to fight,
And on his head his heritage to keep,
Sworded and crowned a king, in my sad stead,
To fill the place I had not might to hold;
And for the child then bitterly brought forth,
Unseasonable, that being but woman born
Broke with the news her father's heart, who died
Desperate in her of comfort, had he sent
The warrior that I would be, and in time
To look with aweless eye on that day's fight
That reddened with the ruin of our hopes
The hour that rocked my cradle, — who shall say
The scathe of Pinkie Cleugh and all that blood
Had made the memory so unfortunate
Of that which was my birth-time? Being a man,
And timelier born to better hap than mine,
I might have set upon that iron day
Another mark than signs it in our sight
Red with reproach forever.

Bothwell. Ay, my queen?
These four nights gone, you met me soldier-like
Escaped from Borthwick, whence I brought you in,
Three darkling hours past midnight, to Dunbar,
Where you put off that sheath of fighting man

For this poor woman's likeness yet you wear,
Wherein you rode with your six hundred men
To meet at Haddington but two days since
These sixteen hundred border folk I led,
And pass with me to Seyton: did you find
Your life more light in you, or higher your heart,
Inside that habit than this woman's coat
That sits so short upon you?
Queen. By my life,
I had forgot by this to be ashamed
Of the strange shape I ride in, but your tongue
Smites my cheek red as is this scanted weed
Wherein I mask my queenship; yet God knows
I had liefer ride thus forth toward such a day
Than hide my sick heart and its fears at home
In kinglier garments than this mask of mine,
Thus with my kirtle kilted to the knee
Like girls that ride in poor folks' ballads forth
For love's sake and for danger's less than mine.
Yet had I rather as your henchman ride
At your right hand, and hear your bridle ring,
Than sit thus womanly to watch men strike.
Bothwell. There will be parleying first: I have word of this,
That they set forth at heaviest of the night
From Edinburgh to cross our march betimes,
And by the French ambassador your friend
At Musselburgh were overtaken, whence
We look for news by him what hearts they bear,
What power, and what intent; he hath ta'en on him
To stand between our parts as mediator
And bear the burden of our doubtful peace;
We must fight mouth to mouth ere hand to hand,
But the clean steel must end it.
Queen. Now would God
I had but one day's manhood, and might stand
As king in arms against this battle's breach
A twelve-hours' soldier, and my life to come
Be bounded as a woman's! all those days
That must die darkling should not yet put out
The fiery memory and the light of joy
That out of this had lightened, and its heat
Should burn in them for witness left behind
On those piled ashes of my latter life.
O God, for one good hour of man, and then
Sleep or a crown forever!
Bothwell. By God's light,
The man that had no joy to strike for you
Were such a worm as God yet never made
For men to tread on. Kiss me: by your eyes
And fiery lips that make my heart's blood hot,
I swear to take this signet of your kiss
As far into the fight as man may bear,
And strike as two men in mine arm and stroke
Struck with one sense and spirit.
Queen. If I might change
But this day with you in your stead to strike,
And you look on me fighting, as for me
You have fought ere this last heat so many a prize,
Or for your own hand ere your own was mine,
I would pray God for naught again alive.
But since my heart can strike not in my hand,

Fight you for me; put on my heart to yours,
And let the might of both enforce your arm
With more than its own manhood and that strength
Which is your natural glory.
Bothwell. Sweet, I think,
When we have rid through this day's wrath, if God
Shall give us peace and kingdom and long life,
And make them fruitful to us, we shall bring forth
A brood of kings as lions. Now in brief
If this shall be, or shall not, may we know;
For look where yonder, facing to the sun
Comes up to us-ward from the under field
One with a flag of message; in mine eye
It is the Frenchman.
Queen. I will meet him here;
Here will I sit upon this rock for throne,
And give such audience as my fortune may, —
Either the last that shall salute me queen,
Or first of my new reign, that from this day
Shall fearfully begin for them whose fear
Till now has held me shackled, and my will
Confined of theirs unqueenly.
Bothwell. I meantime
Will see our line in order; for this truce
Must hold not long; I would our hosts should meet
Before the heat strikes of the middle day,
And this June sun drop on our soldiers' heads
Or shoot their eyes out.
[*Exit.*
Queen. If God give us peace!
Yet, though he give and we twain see good days,
I would not lose for many fortunate years,
And empire ringed with smooth security,
The sharp and dangerous draught of this delight
That out of chance and peril and keen fear
Springs as the wine out of the trampled grape
To make this hour sweet to my lips, and bid
My dancing heart be like a wave in the sun
When the sea sways between the sun and wind
As my sense now between the fears and hopes
That die to-day forever. Oh! this doubt
That is not helpless, but has armor on
And hands to fight with, has more joy withal,
And puts more spirit into the flesh of life,
More heart into the blood, and light in the eyes,
Than the utter hour of triumph, and the fight
More than the prize is worth man's prizing; yea,
For when all's won, all's done, and naught to do
Is as a chain on him that with void hands
Sits pleasureless and painless. I had rather
Have looked on Actium with Mark Antony
Than bound him fast on Cydnus. O my hour!
Be good to me, as even for the doubt's sake
More than safe life I love thee; yet would choose
Not now to know, though I might see the end,
If thou wilt be good to me; do thy work,
Have thine own end; and, be thou bad or good,
Thou shalt nor smite nor crown a queen in heart
Found lesser than her fortune.

Enter Du Croc.

Now, my lord,
What is their will who by such sovereign show
Should be my lords indeed? if you that came
'Twixt crown and crown ambassador pass now
Between our camps on message: but this day
Shall leave in Scotland but one sovereignty
To see that sun sink.

Du Croc. Madam, from the lords
I come on errand but for love and fear
That move me toward your highness; on whose part
I reasoning with them of their faith to you,
And bond wherein their loyalties should live,
By counsel of the Laird of Lethington,
Was charged to bear you from them present word
For what they stand against your sight in arms,
And will not but by force of yours dissolve
Till it be granted.

Queen. Speak, my lord: I know
Your heart is whole and noble as their faith
Is flawed and rotten; no disloyal word
Shall make your tongue disloyal in mine ear,
Speaking for them.

Du Croc. This is their whole demand:
That from the bloody hand which holds your own
You pluck it forth, and cast him from your sight
To judgment, who now stands through you secure,
And makes his weapon of your wounded name,
And of your shame his armor; and to him
They offer fight with equal hand to hand,
Of noble seconds in what sum he will
To match in blood and number with his own,
If so he list to meet their chosen of men
In personal battle, backed with less or more
Or singly sworded; but this much they swear, —
They had rather make their beds in the earth alive
Than yet sit still and let this evil be.
And on your own part I beseech your grace,
Set not your heart against the hearts of these,
Lest it be broken of them, but betimes
Call yet to mind what grief and shame will be
Among your friends in France and all our part
To see you so with this man's hap inwound
That in his fall you cast yourself away,
And hand in hand run on with him to death.

Queen. They are all forsworn that seek his death: all they
With these blown tongues now questing for his blood
By judgment set him free as innocence,
And now take back the doom they gave, and turn
On their own heads the lie: devise such shame
As lewd folk loathe, to gird themselves withal,
And wear it for a jewel; seek and set
The name of liar upon them like a crown,
And bind about them as a coat and cloak
Plain treason and ungilded infamy,
Bare as a beggar; let them sue for grace,
Kneel here and ask me favor; save as thus
I treat not with them. Say how I sit here,
In this mean raiment, on this naked stone,
Their queen to judge them, and with heart to weigh
Their fault against my mercy; which yet once,

hough hardly their submission may deserve,
ay, haply they may find.
Re-enter BOTHWELL.
Bothwell. Good day, my lord.
ou look far off upon me; by your brow
nd strange-eyed salutation I may read
he burden of your this day's embassy.
it but I whom all these ranked in arms
re come against to battle?
Du Croc. Ay, my lord:
o hand is raised there dangerous to the queen,
or thought of heart not loyal.
Bothwell. Why to me?
'hat hurt have I done to them? none of these
it would be gladly in my place, who had
ne heart to seek it; 'tis the braver man
nat ever fortune follows: what I hold
have won not basely, but from forth her hand
ave ta'en it manlike, and with spirit as good
ave girt me to maintain it. For my part,
eek no bloodshed, but in single field
lill meet with whom their lot shall fall upon
nat shall be found fair champion on their part
bear the general quarrel; and to this
state and present name shall be no bar,
t the queen's consort as her man shall fight
any good cause simply with God's help
ith any sword that shames not mine to meet.
Queen. It is my cause: me must they strike, or none;
self am all the quarrel; let them yield,
give me battle.
Bothwell. Then, no need of words:
t but your excellency stand here by,
And see the show as once that envoy bound
'Twixt Hannibal and Scipio; by God's grace
This too shall be worth sight and good report
If he not fail us.
Du Croc. Madam, with rent heart
Must I take leave, then, of you.
Queen. Sir, farewell.
I pray you, say not that you saw me weep:
These tears are not to turn the sword's edge soft,
Nor made of fear nor pity; but my heart
Holds no more rule on my rebellious eyes
Than truth on those my traitors; yet I trust
Again to bring both under.
[*Exit* DU CROC.
Bothwell. We must fight;
Yet had I rather take it on mine hand
Than dare the general field.
Queen. No, for God's love.
Bothwell. God hath not so much love of us to serve;
Nor would I wager on his head to-day
That he shall fight upon our side. Look there!
They are at point to cross; even now you see
The first glint on them stirring of the sun
As they set forth to make by the eastern bank
Along the meadows edgeways towards Dalkeith
Before they turn in wheel, and take the hills;
I see their bent of battle; yet we keep
The slopes and crest here with our covering lines
If they stand fast.
Queen. What, have you fear of that?
Bothwell. I cannot tell. The day grows fiery hot:
I would we might close in at once, and strike
Before the noon burn; all the pause we make,

Who stand here idle watchers till they join,
Takes off some heart from us for weariness,
And gives us doubt; I would the field were set.
Queen. Why should not we that wait for them and chafe
Break rather on them coming, and brush off
Their gathering muster from the hill-skirts there
With one sheer stroke of battle as from heaven,
Right on them hurling down with all our host
Out of these heights ere they made head below?
Bothwell. No, my sweet captain: we must hold this fast,
This height of vantage, and keep close our ranks
As I have ranged in order: see again,
How they sweep round, and settle fast in file
There on the ridge of Cowsland, with their backs
Turned on the sun that climbs toward noon too fast,
And in their front that hollow gap of hill
Three crossbow-shots across; so far apart
We look upon each other for a breath,
And hold our hands from battle; but you see
How soon both sides must lash together: yea,
I would we might not hold off yet an hour,
But close at once, and end.
Queen. That burgh below,
Is it not Preston Pans? These hills are set
As stages for the show of such high game
As is played out for God's content on earth
Between men's kings and kingdoms; yet I think
He that beholds hath no such joy o' the game
As he that plays, nor can the joy be known
Save of man only, that man has to play
When the die's throw rings death for him or life.
How clear the wind strikes from the mounting sun!
I am glad at heart the day we have of fight
Should look thus lively on both sides that meet
Beneath so large an open eye of heaven.
The wind and sun are in my blood; I feel
Their fire and motion in me like a breath
That makes the heart leap. Dear, I too have read
The tale of Rome whence lightly you chose out
A likeness for us; but the parts we bear,
We are to play them with a difference, take
A fairer end upon us though we fall
Than they that in their hazard were most like
To this our imminent fortune: had I been
She for whose lips love let the round world fall,
And all man's empire founder, on that day
When earth's whole strengths met on the warring sea,
And side with side clashed of the kingdomed world,
I had not given my galleys wings for fear
To bear me out of the eye of battle, nor
Put space of flight between me and my love,
More than I think on this wave's edge that foams
To leave our chance unshipwrecked, or forsake
My more imperial Antony.
Bothwell. Would that now
We stood less near their hazard! on our part
I fear to see the lines already melt

If we hold longer off, and this firm front
Unfix itself and with no stroke dissolve
As snows in summer: half my folk by this
For thirst are fallen upon the wine-casks there
We brought from Seyton; and for those that stand,
We have not half their hearts upon our side
Whose hands are armed to uphold it. I must fight
With whom they choose, and take upon my hand
The day with all its issue: if our cause
Be set upon the general cast of fight,
It is but lost. Let messengers be sent
To know of the enemy if his challenge hold
Which I stand armed to answer; but no Scot
Shall bear the message and betray our need:
Two Frenchmen of your guard shall cross, and bring
Their fighter's name back that my sword must know,
And we twain meet, and end it in fair field
Between these ranks; and for my single part,
I am glad the chance should hang but on my hand,
And my sole stroke determine the dim war
That flags yet in the dark and doubt of fate
Till mine arm fix it fast, and in God's sight
Confirm and close the chapter of it. Come,
Choose you your envoys.

Queen. Nay, choose you the man
That you will fight with; let him be not one
Who had no part with us in Darnley's blood,
So God shall strike not on his unjust side
Who fights against you.

Bothwell. 'Faith, if God were judge,
He should not do us right to approve their cause
Who helped us to that slaying, and in its name
Take on them now to accuse us, and appeal
As guiltless to him against their proper deed
And this right hand that wrought but with their will;
Wherefore, so far forth as it hangs on God,
From such a champion I should bear the bell,
If he be righteous; which to assure you of,
That even for God's sake you may feel no fear,
Let Morton meet me.

Queen. Oh, that two-tongued knave!
The worst of all my traitors, whom I spared
And should have slain when you had brought him home
To help despatch his friend that had been! Nay,
Him shall you meet not: he shall die no death
So brave as by your sword; the axe thinks long
To clasp his cursed neck; your hand, dear lord,
Shall not redeem it.

Bothwell. Come, content you, sweet;
Him I must meet, or other; and myself
Care not if one that struck with us it be
Or one that struck not; only for your ease,
To make you trustful for God's judgment's sake
And confident of justice, I thought well
To choose a man of counsel with us then,
And on this challenge fight with him, that God
Might witness with us of his treacherous cause
If I should win the field; but, by this hand,
I put more trust in it and in my sword
Than in God's hand or judgment. Have no fear:

What is our cause you know, and in what right
We stand here armed; vex not your constant heart
To seek for help or warrant more than this,
Which if it cannot stand us yet in stead
It shall avail not to devise fresh means
To underprop with prayer and trust in God,
And stay our souls with footless faith or hope
That other might will aid our right than ours.
Here shall we try it; and you, sustain your spirit
Still at its height and poise of fortitude
Firmly to front this infirm face of things
That changes on us gazing, and each hour
Shifts as the wind that shapes it; fear nor hope,
Bethink yourself, shall make or unmake fate,
Nor faith unbuild or build it, but that end
Will be at last that will be. So, keep heart;
Choose you two messengers for trust and speed
While I go form again these lines of ours
That break and loosen in the enemy's sight,
If time shall let re-shape their ranks, and mend
The breach of their defection; in short space
Shall we have answer back whom I must meet,
And then my sword shall take this day's chance up,
And ease us of its trouble. Nay, make haste:
Too long I stand yet here; send off at once
Our message, and bid speed their word again
Before our battle melt out of our hands,
And we be ta'en with no man at our back.

Scene II.—The Camp of the Lords.

Morton, Lindsay, Du Croc, Kirkaldy *of* Grange, *and others.*

Morton. Will she not let him fight?
Kirkaldy. With no mean man,
Or lesser than himself: he shall not mate
With me nor Tullibardine; we must find
One equal to make proffer of his hand,
And by these messengers again returned,
That brought her first word and took back our own,
Himself now bids you forth by name to take
This justice on your sword.
Morton. And by my hand,
I am as glad as of his present death
That I should be the man of all chosen out
To lay his death upon him. Let him know
I am armed by this for answer.
Lindsay. Nay, my lord:
Who fights with Bothwell on this general plea
For all the land's sake, should not only bear
The right upon his sword of this large cause,
But stand in the eye of all the land so far
From all men's charge or any man's conceit
That might repute him touched or mixed at all
With Bothwell's works, or once but on his part
Suspected in time past or glanced upon
Of enemies' eyes as parcel of his act,
That no sharp tongue on earth might find the mean
To tax his victory with unrighteousness
If he should conquer,—as, were yours the sword,
I doubt not it should surely,—nor dispute
The justice and pure truth that on our side

Took up this challenge. You, they know, were one
Of that dead man once wronged, and sworn, they say,
To turn his treacheries on his head alive,
And with his own lie pierce him as a sword:
He never did me wrong, nor gave men cause
To deem his death a thing that I should seek
As just and natural part of my desire;
So shall none hold it questionable or strange
If I should stand against his slayer in arms
As to do battle on the dead man's part
That was toward me no traitor.
Morton. Well, my lord,
Take you then this upon you: to your hand
I shall not grudge to yield that honor up,
Which none more noble in the world might wield,
Nor heart more true deserve; in sign whereof
Here from mine own side I ungird the sword
Which was my grandsire's, whose two-handed stroke
Did suchlike service as shall you to-day
To Scotland, in his hand that belled the cat,
When other slaves that clung about the throne
Made the land foul as this doth; to which end
I gird you with it, that its edge again
May lop as high a dangerous head away,
And shear a weed as poisonous. This it was
That drove to death even with its lift and flash
The crew of Cochrane, as in scorn to smite
Their necks that craved the halter, and were bowed
Before the light and wind but of its stroke
Down to the dust and death; and this again
Struck with one blow to hell by Fala brook
Spens of Kilspindie, who being over-blown
With favor and light love of the fourth James
Gave with his life all these to Douglas up
At the first change of sword-play; from such hand
By heritage I have it, as from mine
You now, my lord, by gift; and I well think
That in those great dead hands of Bell-the-Cat
It did no worthier work than ere we sleep
This land in yours shall see it.
Lindsay. Sir, with glad heart
I take the burden to me thankfully
That this great gift lays on: as with my hands
I strip this armor off, and take from yours
To gird my body left else weaponless
This the most prosperous and most noble steel
That ever did truth right, so from my soul
God witness me that I put off all thought
Save of his justice to be served and shown,
And keep no memory more to enforce my hand
That he for whose dead sake I am girt to fight
With one that slew him was of my kindred blood.
Nor this mine own foe that I seek to slay,
But only that I stand here single-souled
For this land's sake and all its noble brood,
To do their judgment on his murderous head
Who is their general traitor; and I pray,
Here on my knees before these warlike lines, [*Kneeling.*
That God on whom I call will equally
This day preserve and punish in men's sight

The just and unjust that he looks upon,
With blameless hand dividing their just doom
To one and other. Yea, as thou art Lord,
With eye to read between our hearts, and hand
To part between us punishment and grace,
Hear, God, and judge; and as thy sentence is,
So shall man's tongue speak ever of this day
And of his cause that conquers.
Morton. Laird of Grange,
While these that twice brought message from the queen
Bear now this last news back of what they hear,
Lest, when the traitor knows whom he shall meet,
His foul heart fail him, and his false foot flee
By what way forth is left him toward Dunbar,
Take you two hundred horse, and with good speed
Cross to the right beyond this hollow ground,
And cut him off: so, though he fain would fly
And she stand fast or follow, yet we hold
As in one toil the lioness and the wolf
That clomb by night into the lion's bed,
Who stand now staked about with nets, and, ringed
With pikes and hounds of hunters, glare at bay
With eyes and teeth that shine against us yet;
But the fierce feet are trammelled in our toils,
Nor shall the tongues lap life again of man.
Du Croc. Ay, lion-like, my lord, she bears herself.
As who should shake all spears or shafts away
Like leaves that fell upon her, and all fears
As grains of dust brushed off; but he too makes
Such gallant show at need of such good heart
As in this utter peril where he stands
Might win, for one that had no unjust cause,
Pity and praise of enemies, and for him
At least such mingled and discolored fame
As falls not on a coward; nor can men
Report him in his end and sore extremity
But as a soldier tried of hand and brain,
Skilful and swift, with heart to match his eye
And wit to serve them; could these ye avail
To ransom him by spirit of soldiership
And craft with courage tempered as with fire
To wield with fiery cunning the wide war,
He should not fall but mightily, no cease
But with a strife as earthquake.
Morton. Well, my lord,
With no such strife we think to wi him. — Go,
And if they send again to treat with us
Speak you with her, and bring us once more word.

Scene III. — The Queen's Camp.

The Queen *and* Bothwell.

Queen. Are we quite lost?
Bothwell. Ay, if I fight not; but I will not die and fight not.
Queen. What, no help?
Is there not left a score of manlike me To stand and strike round us that i their ring
May fight enclosed, and fall where non shall fly?
Are all our strengths slid from us? no one troop
That has not piecemeal dropped wit shame away?
Not some twelve friends to back us ye and die
As never men died nobler?
Bothwell. No, not three:
My levies there of Lothian and th Merse

Are slipped away like water; of your men
Not yet four hundred lie along the heights,
Nor half will stay of these a half-hour hence.
Look too where yonder rides about the hill
The Laird of Grange, between us and Dunbar,
As to make onset with two hundred horse
Thence where the way is smooth, while those in front
Charge up the hill right on our unfenced camp,
And their trap's teeth shut on us. This remains
Of all our chance, this one way to make end,
That, while they yet refuse me not a man
To bear the day's weight on his sword and mine,
I go to meet whom they soever choose,
With no more question made; and this I will,
If yet they grant me but their meanest man
For opposite as equal.

Queen. Have they hearts,
That have you for their fiery star of fight
To see and not to follow? That I could
But give mine own among all these away,
And with the parcels of it portioned out
Divide myself into a hundred hearts
Of manlier-spirited blood, to raise us up
For these a tribe of soldiers! Speak to them,
And they will hear, and hunger to go on
Full of your words to death; yea, all as I
Will thirst to die around you. O my God!
What is their blood, that it can kindle not
To be so called of such a chief to die,
To hear his words, and leap not? Hast thou made
Such stuff of man's flesh as we take for man,
And mixed not soul enough to serve the hound
Who gives for love his life up? These go back,
These that might die, they start aside from death,
They have no joy to close with it, but fear,—
These that I deemed, come what might worst on us,
Should fall with face and heart one fire of joy
To ride on death, and grapple him and die.
Have I not heard of men once in the world?
I see none only but mine only love,
Who finds not one to follow. You shall fight,
And, if we thrive not, shame them with your end
As I with mine ensuing. That I might stand
Your second, and my sword be page to yours,
As on your death my death should wait at need,
And halt not after! No, you shall not die.
O miserable white hanging hands, that rest
Baffled and bloodless! let your kingdom go,
Let all things pass together: what of price
Should ye keep back that could not fight for him
Who falls for lack of seconds? Nay, the fault
Comes all of me that fail him, I it is
Bring down that high head to the earth with mine,
That helmless head, for my sake; oh, for love's,
Kiss me, and kill me! be not wroth, but strike;
For if I live I shall but deal more death,

And where I would not shall the more
destroy,
Living and loving; yea, whom I would
save,
Him shall I slay the surelier: save
then me,
Lest I do this, and dying abhor myself,
Save me and slay; let not my love
again
Kill more than me, that would have
shed my blood
To spare the blood I shed; make me
now sure;
Let me cease here.
Bothwell. Peace, and give heed: you
see
Whither the day has brought us, and
what hope
Holds anywhere of rescue; this one
lot
Lies in my hand by fortune to be
drawn, —
That yet by God's and by our enemies'
grace
I may fight singly though my whole
world fail,
And end no less than soldier. Now,
my queen,
As you are highest of women's hearts
that live,
And nobler than your station stands
your soul, —
As you had never fear, and in this
past
As ever you have loved me, — by such
sign
And in such name I charge you, put
me not
In this great need to shame: let me go
forth
As should yourself being king, had you
the cause
That our linked loves put on me. By
that heart
That is so fain within you to be man's,
Make me not meaner than the man I
am,
Nor worthless of the name; think with
what soul
Would you stand up to battle in my
stead,
And wrong me not to pluck that prize
away,
Which, were you I, you would not yield
to me,
Nor I would ask of you; desire not
this,
To have me for your sake so vile a
thing,
When I should rise up worthiest, that
no man
Could bear such name, and live; bid me
not be —
Because you love me that are first on
earth
And crowned of queens most royal —
such a slave
As might not seek and be not spit
upon
The foulest favor that is given for
gold
From lips more vile than all things else
but I
Who durst not fight for you: make me
not this;
Let me die rather such a man as might
Having your love, had fortune loved
him too,
Have lived beside you kinglike, and
not left
Less memory than a king's.
Queen. Oh, you shall go!
Look how I hold you not: yes, you
shall fight,
And I sit strengthless here. — You shall
not yet:
If I did know that God were with my
heart,
Then should you go indeed; could I
sit sure
My prayer had power upon him, and
my cause
Had made him mine to fight for me
and take
My charge and this field's issue in his
hand,
I would not doubt to send you. Nay
myself
Will speak to those my soldiers; they
will fight;
They shall not choose for shame who
hear me speak,
But fear to fight not. Oh, for all this
yet,
If they were men about me, they would
sweep

Those traitors from the hillside as a wind,
And make me way to live. What! if I speak,
If I kneel to them, each man by his name,
Bid him fight for me though I be not king,
His king to lead him, — as, had I been born
My father's son, they should have fought, and found
A king to fight for and a sword to lead
Worth many a good sword's following, — nay, but these
That will not fight for you whose sword they see
Worth all their swords to follow, for no king's
Would they take heart to strike. Love, you shall go:
Send out a flag to bid one come and say
Who dares of all fight with you. Why, methought
This march-folk loved you and your sword's bright name
That burned along their borders: is there left
No such fierce love of theirs and faith at need
To do us soldier's service?
Bothwell. Look, and see:
Their ranks unknit themselves, and slide more fast
From the bare slopes away whereon they stand
Than the last leaves or the last snows that fade
From off the fields or branches: and this thaw
Speaks not our spring, but winter. Let them pass;
If I may stand but in mine enemy's face,
One foot of ours shall slip not, and one hand
Be reddened on our side. I will go send
Word with your flag of truce by Ormiston,
To bid their spokesman to us. [*Exit.*
Queen. What am I worth,
That can nor fight nor pray? my heart is shut
As a sealed spring of fire, and in mine ears
This air that holds no thunder, but fair day,
Sounds louder than a stricken brazen bell
That rings in a great wind, or the blown sea
That roars by night for shipwreck.
Re-enter BOTHWELL *with* KIRKALDY.
Bothwell. Here is he
That brings our lords' will with him, and shall show
But in your private ear; I while you please
Will wait apart upon you. [*Retires.*
Queen. Is it you,
Is it my friend of France, my knight and friend,
Comes on such errand in mine extreme need
To me that honored him? Sir, time has been
That, had one asked me what man most on earth
I would for trust have sought the service of
In such sore straits as this, I had found no name
But yours to leap the first upon my lips,
On whom I have seen my father, the French king,
Point with his hand, saying, *Yonder goes there one*
Of the most valiant men in all our age,
And ever would he choose you on his side
In all his pastimes for your manhood's sake
And might in jousts of men and gallant games,
And when they shot for mastery at the butts
Would make you shoot two arrows still for one,
And took delight beyond all shots of theirs
To see how far forth would your great shaft fly,

Sped for his pleasure; and my heart grew great
For my land's sake whereof your strength was made,
That bore such men for honor; and the best
Who served my father Henry in his wars
Looked reverently upon you horsed at head
Of your brave hundred men that rode with you,
And never the great constable of France
Would speak to you uncovered as to one
Less than his own place worthy; and your hand
Here on these marches hath not lost its praise
For many as fair a stroke as overthrew
Between our ranks and the English in mid-field
Lord Rivers' brother, fighting for this land
That with a tongue as true and serviceable
You strove in speech to save the freedom of,
That by no policy it should be subdued
To a French province. So for faith and love,
For valor, wisdom, and for gentleness,
I wist no Scot had worthier name alive:
Shall I say now I have no deadlier foe? [KIRKALDY *kneels.*
I do not bid you kneel: speak, and stand up;
I have no help or comfort of men's knees,
Nor pleasure of false worship; well I know,
For all knees bowed, how hearts and hands are bent
Of mine own men against me. Speak, I pray:
I am as their servant bound who speak in you
And open-eared to hear them.

Kirkaldy. From the lords,
Madam, no word I have to bring but one,
That from this field they will not part alive
Without the man in bonds they came to seek;
Him will they take, or die: but on your part
They have no thought that is not set to serve
And do you honor, would but you forsake
The murderer of your husband, who to you
Can be no husband, being but lately wed
To the earl of Huntley's sister, and your friend
By your own mean and favor.

Queen (*to* BOTHWELL). Hold, my lord:
Let not your man give fire. — Sir, guard yourself:
See you not where one stands to shoot at you? —
You will not do me this dishonor, seeing
I have given my faith he should come safely through,
And go back safe?

Bothwell. Why let him, then, and say
That I will yet maintain my proffered cause
To fight with any that shall challenge me
Of the king's murder.

Kirkaldy. Sir, the first was I
To let you wit myself would fight with you
Upon that quarrel; and the first refused,
As being nor earl nor lord nor mate of yours,
But a poor baron only; the like word
You sent to Tullibardine; in whose place
Stands now my lord of Lindsay, if your heart
Yet fail you not to meet him, as it seems
Now to grow cold in shadow of his sword
That hangs against you in the air advanced,
Darkening your sight and spirit.

Bothwell (*to the* QUEEN). Shall this be said,

This shame go forth forever through the world
Of one that held you by the wedded hand
And loosed it even for fear? Now let me go:
There is no way now but the best, and this
You shall no more forbid me: one last time
I do implore you, make not of your love
The branding-iron that should sign me slave
In sight of all men always, and on you
Stamp the vile name of wife to no true man,
But harlot of a coward: who shall spare
To throw that name and shame on such a love
As came to such an end as ours shall come
If here its sun set bloodless, but more red
With shame than blood could brand it?

Queen. I have thought,
And set my heart against all chance to come
Of blame or blood that ever shall mark me;
Alone I take it on mine only hand,
And will not yield this one thing up to yours,
Who have yielded all things else, and this I would,
But that I may not with my soul alive. —
Sir, if my lords within whose hand I am
Shall stand content to let my husband go,
Into their ward will I give up myself
On what good terms shall please them to call good,
So he may pass forth freely with such friends
Of these that have not hands enough to fight
As shall cleave to him; I pray you make good speed,
And let this day have end.

Kirkaldy. Madam, I go. [*Exit.*

Queen. Do not speak yet: a word should burst my heart;
It is a hollow crystal full of tears
That even a breath might break, and they be spilt
And life run out with them; no diamond now,
But weaker than of wax. Life of that heart,
There is but one thing hath no remedy, —
Death. All ills else have end or hope of end,
And time to work their worst before time change:
This death hath none; there is all hope shut fast,
All chance bound up forever: change nor time
Can help nor comfort this. You shall not die;
I can hold fast no sense of thought but this, —
You shall not.

Bothwell. Well, being sundered, we may live,
And living meet; and here to hold the field
Were but a deadly victory, and my hand
The mockery of a conqueror's; we should pass
No less their prisoners from the field thus won
Than from these lists defeated. You do well;
They dare not urge or strain the power they have
To bring me prisoner where my witness borne
Might show them parcel of the deed and guilt
For which they rise up to lay hold on me
As upright men of doom, and with pure hands
To hale me to their judgment. I will go,
Till good time bring me back; and you that stay,
Keep faith with me.

Queen. Oh, how does one break faith?
What are they that are faithless? by my love,

I cannot tell or think how I should lie,
Should live and lie to you that are my faith,
My soul, my spirit, my very and only God,
My truth and trust that makes me true of heart,
My life that feeds and light that lightens me,
My breath and blood of living. Doth God think
How I shall be without you? what strange breath
Shall my days draw, what strange blood feed my life,
When this life that is love is gone from them
And this light lost? Where shall my true life go,
And by what far ways follow to find love,
Fly where love will? Where will you turn from me?

Bothwell. Hence will I to Dunbar, and thence again
There is no way but northward and to ship
From the north islands; thence betimes abroad
By land or sea to lurk, and find my life
Till the wheel turn.

Queen. Ah God! that we were set
Far out at sea alone by storm and night
To drive together on one end, and know
If life or death would give us good or ill
And night or day receive, and heaven or earth
Forget us or remember! — He comes back:
Here is the end.

Bothwell. But till time change his tune;
No more nor further. We shall find our day.

Queen. Have we not found? I know not what we shall,
But what hath been and is, and whence they are,
God knows if now I know not. He is here.

Re-enter KIRKALDY.

Kirkaldy. Madam, the lords return by me this word:
With them must you go back to Edinburgh,
And there be well entreated as of friends;
And for the duke, they are with one mind content
He should part hence for safe and present flight;
But here may tarry not, or pass not free.
This is the last word from them by my mouth.

Queen. Ay is it, sir, — the last word I shall hear, —
Last in mine ear forever: no command
Nor threat of man shall I give ear to more,
That have heard this. — Will you not go, my lord?
Is it not I would hold you.

Bothwell. Then, farewell,
And keep your word to me. What, no breath more?
Keep then this kiss too with the word you gave,
And with them both my heart and its good hope
To find time yet for you and me. Farewell. [*Exit.*

Queen. O God! God! God!
Cover my face for me:
I cannot heave my hand up to my head;
Mine arms are broken.
Is he got to horse?
I do not think one can die more than this.
I did not say farewell.

Kirkaldy. My lord is gone.

Queen. Whom spake I to? I have no woman here.
All these men's eyes have seen my naked face
Wrung without tears for anguish, and no hand
Hide my blind eyes if haply they might weep
Great drops of blood and fiery. — Laird of Grange,

I yield myself upon such terms to you
As in these lords' name you rehearsed to me:
Have here my hand for sign.
Kirkaldy. Upon this hand
I lay the loyal witness of my lips
For duteous heart and service, and crave leave
That I may lead your highness through these ranks,
Where at the hill's foot we may find your friends
Who shall come forth to meet you as their queen
With all fair reverence.
Queen. Lead me to my lords:
For one so poor a servant as I am,
Here are too many masters. I could pray,
But that they lack my service and should chafe
If I dwelt long upon my prayer, and let
My duty sleep or slacken toward them; else
I could pray God to shut up from these lands
His hand and eye of favor, that no dew
Might breed herefrom and no bloom break again
Nor grass be glad forever; rain nor sun
Comfort their cankered face and hardening heart,
Nor hand that tilled or foot that trod of man
Pass and not curse them. Let me look but once
Upon this hill whereon till this ninth hour
Mine enemies' hands have crucified my heart.
The sun burns yet, and the stream runs; nor eye
Nor ear have these nor pity. Come, I talk,
Who had no mind; God will not heed me: come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. — THE CAMP OF THE LORDS.

MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY, *etc.*

Morton. What, is the Frenchman gone?
Lindsay. With heavy cheer,
By this to set sad foot in Edinburgh.
Morton. There should we be by nightfall; and you see
How the day reddens downward, and this hill
Hath all its west side fiery; he hath done
The queen and us small service, to put off
Her hour of yielding. Look! the last spears left
Begin to move in sunder; there he flies,
The traitor, with his heartless handful backed
That yet for fear cling to him; and on this side
Grange leads her down the hill between our horse,
Who comes not like one captive.
Enter the QUEEN *and* KIRKALDY.
Queen. Tell me, sirs,
Are they my doomsmen whom I come to find,
And those your headsmen who stand sworded there
And visored soldier-like, that cry on me
To burn and slay me? Let me have quick doom,
And be beyond their crying.
Morton. Madam, I think
You cannot fear of us a deadly doom,
Nor shall you find. — Silence those throats, I say!
Queen. I have not said I feared; nor shall there come
For you that lying breath upon my lips.
What will ye do with what of me ye have
If not what these tongues cry for?
Morton. Some man ride, —
You, Laird of Grange, with two or three at back, —
And with the flatlong stroke of your good swords
Smite their mouths dumb. — Madam, take you no heed:
They shall not hurt you.
Queen. Sir, no heed have I;
I think these common haters shall not hurt

Indeed, nor smite me but with tongues; 'tis you,
My good lords only, from whose noble hands
I look to take my death, who would not lose
Nor lack this royal office. For my sake
Do them no hurt, I pray, who are but your mouths
As you their hands; I see no choice of you,
Or them the lesser traitors.
Hume. I will go:
Ride you that way, sir, by their ranks who shout,
As I this side; for every way men hear
How the field rings that all the hills roar back
With noise of names and cries to burn the whore
And murderess of her husband: spare no strokes
To shame or smite them silent.
Queen. You, my friends,
Good servants that have care of my good name,
And loyal lovers — of your love and grace,
May it please you show me whither I must go
To find what face of death? or if yet none,
And yet ye have not the hardy hearts to slay,
To uncrown and slay me, I require you then
Deliver me into my kinsmen's hands
Of the house of Hamilton, in whose good ward
I am content to abide men's evil will
With honorable surety; which refused,
Of life nor honor shall I hold me sure
For all your vows and voices, but esteem
My life to be as all your honors, dead.
Morton. Madam, with mocks you cannot make us mad,
To bring you to their trustless hands whose ward
Should be to you but dangerous, and to us,
And all this kingdom's hope in heritage,
And all men's good, most mortal. You must go
With us to Edinburgh, and being made safe
Abide the judgment there that shall not fall
By fierce election of men's clamorous mouths
Whose rage would damn you to the fire-clad death,
But by their sentence who shall do no wrong,
If justice may with honor make them sure,
And faith defend from error.
Queen. Ay, my lord?
I shall be doomed, then, ere I die, and stand
Before their face for judgment who should kneel
To take my sentence as a scourge, and bear
What brand my tongue set on them? Nay, ye are mad.
Kings have been slain with violence and red craft,
Or fallen by secret or by popular hands;
But what man heard yet ever of a king
Set to the bar of his own men, to plead
For life with rebels' reasons, and wage words
With whoso dare of all these baser born
Rise up to judge him? Surely I shall die, —
Be rent perchance in pieces of men's fangs,
But of their mouths not sentenced. In fair field
That only steel that bids a king's neck stoop
Is the good sword that in a warlike hand
Makes his head bow, and cuts not off his crown
But with the stroke of battle: who hath seen
By doom of man a king's head kingdomless
Bow down to the axe and block? so base an edge
Can bite not on such necks. Let me bleed here,

By their swift hands who ravin for my blood;
Or be assured how if ye let me live
I live to see you die for me as dogs:
Ye shall be hanged on crosses, nailed on rows,
For birds to rend alive; ye shall have doom,
A dog's doom and a traitor's, and the cord
Strangle the sentence in your laboring lips,
And break the plea that heaves your throat, and leaves
Your tongue thrust forth to blacken: ye shall wage
Words and try causes with the worms and flies
Till they leave bare your bones to sun and wind
As shame shall leave your titles. Was it you [*To* LINDSAY.
That were to fight before me with my lord?
Give me your hand, sir: by this hand of yours
I swear for this thing yet to have your head,
And so thereof assure you.
Morton. Bid the camp
Strike, and set forth behind us. Sirs, to horse;
And, madam, be not yet so great of speech
As utterly to outwear your spirit of strength
With pain and passion that can bear no fruit
But wind and wrath and barren bitterness.
Vex not yourself more than your foes would vex,
Of whom we would be none that ride with you
From them to guard you that would lay red hands
On you yet faint and weak from this fierce day.
Queen. My body and head wax faint, but not my heart;
I have yet there fire enough for all of you,
To burn your strengths up that my feebler limbs
Can make my heart not yield to nor bow down,
Nor fear put out its fires. Come, worthy lords,
And lead me to my loving town again,
That bears your heads not yet above its gates
Where I shall see them festering if I live. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — EDINBURGH: A ROOM IN THE PROVOST'S HOUSE.

Enter MAITLAND *and* PROVOST.

Maitland. Are the gates fast?
Provost. Ay; but the street yet seethes
With ebb and flow of fighting faces thronged,
And crush of onset following on her heel
Where she came in, and whence at her own call
You drove them off her; and above the ranks
Flaps the flag borne before her as she came,
Wrought with the dead king's likeness; and their cry
Is yet to burn or drown her. It were but
A manlike mercy now for men to show,
That she should have some woman's hand of hers
To tend her fainting who should be nigh dead
With fear and lack of food and weariness.
Maitland. Nay, if she die not till she die for fear,
She must outlive man's memory: twice or thrice
As she rode hither with that sable flag
Blown overhead whereon the dead man lay
Painted, and by him beneath a garden tree
His young child kneeling, with soft hands held up,
And the word underwritten of his prayer, —

Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord,— she seemed
At point to swoon, being sick with two days' fast,
And with faint fingers clung upon the rein,
And gaped as one athirst with foodless lips
And fair head fainting; but for very scorn
Was straightway quickened and uplift of heart,
And smote us with her eyes again, and spoke
No weaker word but of her constant mind
To hang and crucify, when time should be,
These now her lords and keepers; so at last
Beneath these walls she came in with the night,
So pressed about with foes that man by man
We could but bring her at a foot's pace through
Past Kirk of Field between the roaring streets,
Faint with no fear, but hunger and great rage,
With all men's wrath as thunder at her heel,
And all her fair face foul with dust and tears,
But as one fire of eye and cheek that shone
With heat of fiery heart and unslaked will
That took no soil of fear.

Provost. What shall be done
When sentence shall pass on her?

Maitland. By my will,
She shall not die, nor lose her royal name,
Wherein the council only shall bear rule,
And take to its own hand the care to wreak
On her false lord now fled our general wrong,
Who being but overtaken of its sword
Shall be divorced at once from her and life.

Provost. But this shall not content the common will,
Nor theirs who bind and loose it with their tongues
And cry now for her blood; the town is loud
With women's voices keener than of men
To call for judgment on her and swift death
Sharp as their anger.

Maitland. Ay, the time is mad
With noise of preachers and the feminine spleen
That of mere rage and blind mobility
Barks in brute heat for blood; but on these tongues
The state yet hangs not, nor the general weal
Is swayed but by the violent breath of these.
Here sits she safe.

Provost. I would I knew it; her mood
Is as a wind that blows upon a fire,
And drives her to and fro: she will not eat,
But rages here and there, and cries again
On us for traitors, on her friends for help,
On God for comfort of her cause and crown
That of his foes and hers is violated,
And will not stint her clamors, nor take rest,
For prayer nor bidding.

Maitland. I will speak with her
Ere I go hence; though she were mild of mood,
The task were hard with Knox for opposite
To bend the council to such policy
As might assure her but of life, which thus
She whets the weapon in his tongue to take. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—ANOTHER ROOM IN THE SAME.

The QUEEN *and an* ATTENDANT.

Queen. Wilt thou be true? but if thou have not heart,

'et do not, being too young to sell
man's blood,
Betray my letter to mine enemies' hands
Where it should be a sword to smite
me with;
f thou lack heart, I say, being but a
boy,
wear not and break thine oath: but if
thou have,
Thou shalt not ask, for this mine errand
done,
The thing I will not give thee. At
Dunbar
ring but this letter to my husband's
hand;
pare for no speed; if it were possible,
would it might be with him ere day
dawn
n me condemned of men. I have no
hope,
hou seest, but in thee only: thou art
young,
nd mean of place, but be thou good
to me
nd thou shalt sit above thy masters
born
nd nobles gray in honor. Wilt thou go?
Lave here mine only jewel, and my
faith
hat I plight to thee, when my hand
may choose,
o give thee better gifts. Haste, and
so thrive
s I by thee shall. [*Exit Attendant.*
Though thou play me false,
hou dost no more than God has done
with me,
nd all men else before thee: yet I
could not
ut write this worthless one word of
my love,
hough I should die for writing it in
vain,
nd he should never read it.
Enter MAITLAND.
Come you not
o tell me of my commons and your
friends,
hat by their will despite you I must
die?
were no stranger now than all things
are
hat fall as on me dreaming.

Maitland. Madam, no:
I come to plead with you for your own
life,
Which wrath and violent mood would
cast away.
Queen. What is my life to any man
or me
As ye have made it? If ye seek not
that,
Why have ye torn me from my hus-
band's hand,
With whom ye know that I would live
and die
With all content that may be in the
world?
Maitland. For your own honor have
we sundered you.
You know not him, who late writ word
—myself
Can show this letter—to the Lady
Jane,
She was his wife and you his concubine,
No more but sport and scandal in his
sheets,
And loved for use but as a paramour,
And for his ends to rise and by your
lips
Be kissed into a kingdom; and each
week
Since they were first but as in show
divorced
And but of craft divided, on some days
Have they held secret commerce to
your shame
As wedded man and wife.
Queen. There is one thing
That I would ask of even such friends
as you,—
To turn me with my lord adrift at sea,
And make us quit of all men.
Maitland. For yourself,
You drive on no less danger here of
wreck,
Seeing for your life if England take no
care
France will nor strike nor speak; and
had you not
In your own kindly kingdom yet some
friends
Whose hearts are better toward you,
these wot well
You have none left you helpful in the
world.

Yet what we may will I and all these do
To serve you in this strait; so for this night
Let not your peril, which can breed not fear,
For that breed anger in you; and fare-well. [*Exit.*
Queen. None but such friends? O yet my living lord,
O still my comfort, hadst thou none but me
As I save thee have no man, we would go
Hand fast in hand to dreadless death, and see
With such clear eyes as once our mar-riage-bed
Fire, or the sword's light lifted to make end
Of that one life on both our lips that laughed
To think he could not sunder them who smote,
Nor change our hearts who chilled them; we would kiss,
Laugh, and lie down, and sleep: but here in bonds
I will not tamely like a dumb thing die
That gives its blood and speaks not. If I find
No faith in all this people, yet my curse
Shall through this casement cry in all their ears
That are made hard against me. — Ho there! you,
All that pass by, your queen am I that call:
Have I no friend of all you to turn back
The swords that point on this bare breast, the hands
That grasp and hale me by the hair to death,
By this discrowned rent hair that wore too soon
The kingdom's weight of all this land in gold?
Have I no friend? no friend?
Voice without. Ay, here was one;
Know you yet him? — Raise up the banner there,
That she may look upon her lord, and take
Comfort.
A Woman. What! was not this that kneels the child
Which hung once at that harlot's breast now bare,
And should have drunk death from its deadly milk?
Hide it for shame; bind up the wanton hair,
Cover the poisonous bosom: here is none
To kiss the print of that adulterer's head
Which last lay on it.
Another Voice. Whither is he flown,
Whose amorous lips were bloody, and left red
The shameless cheek they fed on as with shame?
Where is your swordsman at your back to guard
And make your sin strut kinglike where his hand
That made this dead man's child knee fatherless,
And plead with God against you for his blood?
Where is your king-killer?
Queen. The day shall be
That I will make this town a fire, and slake
The flame with blood of all you: there shall stand
No mark of man, no stone of these its walls,
To witness what my wrath made ruin of
That turned it first to smoke, and then put out
With all your blood its ashes.
Enter PROVOST.
Hear you, sir
How we are handled of our townsfolk there,
Being yet in ward of you? but by my head,
If now by force it fall not, you as these
Shall buy this of me bloodily, and first
Shall bleed of all whose lives will pay not me.

Provost. Madam, as you desire to see
that day,
ntain yourself: this flame whereon
you blow
ill fasten else untimely on your hand,
d leave it harmless toward us. I
beseech you,
ough but for hate of us and hope to
hurt,
t, and take rest.
Queen. I will not: what are ye,
at I should care for hate of you to
live
ho care not for the love's sake of my
life?
I shall die here in your hateful hands,
God's I put my cause, as into them
ield the spirit that dares all enemies
yet
force to take it from me. Die or
live
needs must at their bidding; but to
sleep,
t, drink, weep, laugh, speak or keep
silence, these
ey shall not yet command me till I
die. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VII. — The High Street.

A Crowd of Citizens.

First Citizen. Who says she shall not
die?
Second Citizen. Even he that stands
rst in this city, Morton: by his doom,
ath shall not pass upon her.
First Citizen. Will he say it?
t is this man not all the tongue or
hand
at Scotland has to speak or smite
with.
Third Citizen. Nay,
hen he so spake against their honest
voice
ho called for judgment, one arose
that said —
know not who, but one that spake for
God —
at he who came between God's
sword and her
ould as a stayer of justice by the
sword
stricken of God's justice.
First Citizen. What said he?
Third Citizen. No word, but frowned;
and in his eye and cheek
There sprang a fire, and sank again,
as 'twere
For scorn that anger should have leave
to speak,
Though silently; but Maitland writhed
his lip,
And let his teeth grin doglike, and be-
tween
There shot some snarling word that
mocked at God,
And at the servants of his wrath, who
wait
To see his will done on her, and men's
hands
Made ministers to set it forth so broad
That none might pass and read not.
Second Citizen. Why, by this
Part hangs of it already in men's sight:
I have word here from Dunbar, of one
that was
An officer of Bothwell's, and alive
Laird of Blackadder, whom they seized
at sea
Flying from death to deathward, and
brought back
To be nigh rent in pieces of their hands
Who haled him through the streets to
hang, and left
Not half a man unbroken or unbruised
To feel the grip o' the gallows.
First Citizen. They did well:
Shall we do worse, that have within our
hand
The heart and head of all this evil, her
By whom all guilt looks guiltless till she
die
A whore's death or a murderer's, burn
or drown,
And leave more free the common doom
of man
To pass on lesser sins? While she
doth live,
How should it speak for shame to bid
men die
For what sin done soever, who might
say
She lives and laughs yet in God's face
and eye,
And finds on earth no judgment as do
these

Whose bloodiest hands are whiter than her soul?
Let her die first.
Third Citizen. Ay shall she, if God put
Upon those lips that never lacked it yet
His fire to burn men's hearts, and make that tongue
His sword that hath been ever. Yesternight
Came Knox to Edinburgh, and here should speak
By this among us of the doom to fall
On us or her, that if it bruise her not
Must glance aside against us.
Second Citizen. He is here.
Draw nigh, but make no noise.
Enter JOHN KNOX.
First Citizen. Nay, all the press
Heaves round about him silent.
Others. Sirs, give place;
Make way for Master Knox to stand and speak
Here in your midst; here is it higher; give way.
Make room to hear him. Peace there, and stand still.
John Knox. What word is this that ye require of man?
Ye that would hear me, what speech heard of mine
Should lift your hearts up if they sit not high, —
If they lack life, should quicken? for this day
Ye know not less than I know that the Lord
Hath given his enemy to you for a prey,
His judgment for a fire: what need have ye,
Or he what need of other tongues to speak
Than this which burns all ears that hear on earth
The blast of this day's justice blown in heaven —
As where is he that hears not? In your hand
Lies now the doom of God to deal, and she
Before your face to abide it, in whose mouth
His name was as a hissing; and had I
The tongues in mine of angels, and their might,
What other word or mightier should I seek
Than this to move you? or, should ye wax cold,
What fuel should I find out to kindle you?
If God ye hear not, how shall ye hear me?
Or if your eyes be sealed to know not her,
If she be fit to live or no, can I
With words unseal them? None so young of you
But hath long life enough to understand
And reason to record what he hath seen
Of hers and of God's dealings mutually
Since she came in. Then was her spirit made soft,
Her words as oil, and with her amorous face
She caught men's eyes to turn them where she would,
And with the strong sound of her name of queen
Made their necks bend; that even of God's own men
There were that bade refuse her not her will,
Deny not her, fair woman and great queen,
Her natural freedom born, to give God praise
What way she would, and pray what prayers; though these
Be as they were, to God abominable
And venomous to men's souls. So came there back
The cursed thing cast forth of us and so
Out of her fair face and imperious eyes
Lightened the light whereby men walk in hell.
And I that sole stood out, and bade not let
The lightning of this curse come down on us
And fly with feet as fire on all winds blown
To burn men's eyes out that behold God's face,

That being long blind but now gat sight, and saw,
And praised him seeing; I that then spake and said,
Ten thousand men here landed of our foes
Were not so fearful to me on her side
As one mass said in Scotland; that withstood
The man to his face I loved, her father's son,
Then mastered by the pity of her, and made
Through that good mind not good,—who then but I
Was taxed of wrongful will, and for hard heart
Miscalled of men? And now, sirs, if her prayer
Were just and reasonable, and unjust I
That bade shut ears against it; if the mass
Hath brought forth innocent fruit, and in this land
Wherein she came to stablish it again
Hath stablished peace with honor; if in her
hath been found no seed of shame, and she
That loved and served it seem now in men's sight
No hateful thing nor fearful; if she stand
Such a queen proven as should prove honorable
The rule of women, and in her that thing
Be shown forth good that was called evil of me,
Best and not curst,—then have I sinned, and they
That would have crossed me would have crossed not God:
Thereof now judge ye. Hath she brought with her
Peace, or a sword? and since her incoming
Hath the land sat in quiet, and the men
Been rest but for one year? or came not in
Behind her feet, right at her back, and shone
Above her crowned head as a fierier crown,
Death, and about her as a raiment wrapt
Ruin? and where her foot was ever turned
Or her right hand was pointed, hath there fallen
No fire, no cry burst forth of war, no sound
As of a blast blown of an host of men
For summons of destruction? Hath God shown
For sign she had found grace in his sight, and we
For her sake favor, while she hath reigned on us,
One hour of good, one week of rest, one day?
Or hath he sent not for an opposite sign
Dissensions, wars, rumors of wars, and change,
Flight and return of men, terror with power,
Triumph with trembling? Hath one foot stood fast,
One head not bowed, one face not veiled itself,
One hand not hidden? Was this once or twice
That ye beheld, this brief while of her reign,
Strong men one day make mouths at God, the next
Lie where his foes lie fallen? or since she came
Have ye seen raised up of them and cast down
But one or two that served her? Which of these,
Which of them all that looked on her and loved,
And men spake well of them, and pride and hope
Were as their servants,—which of all them now
Shall men speak well of? How fared he the first
Hailed of his own friends and elect her lord,
Who gave her kinsmen heart and godless hope

By him to reign in her and wield this land,
Yet once with me took counsel and sought grace,
And suddenly God left him, and he stood
Brain-smitten, with no bride-bed now nor throne
To conquer, but go senseless to his grave,
The broken-witted Hamilton, — what end,
Think ye, had this man? Or what hope and hap
The next whose name met on men's lips with hers,
And ballads mourned him in his love's sight slain, —
Gordon, that in the dawn of her dark day
Rose northward as a young star fiery red,
Flashed in her face, and fell, for her own breath
Quenched him? What good thing gat they for her sake,
These that desired her, yet were mighty lords,
Great in account of great men? So they twain
Perished; and on men meaner far than these
When this queen looked, how fared they? folk that came
With wiles and songs and sins from oversea,
With harping hands and dancing feet, and made
Music and change of phrases in her ear, —
White rose out of the south, star out of France,
Light of men's eyes and love! yea, verily,
Red rose out of the pit, star out of hell,
Fire of men's eyes and burning! for the first
Was caught as in a chamber snare, and fell
Smiling, and died with *Farewell, the most fair*
And the most cruel princess in the world. —
With suchlike psalms go suchlike souls to God
Naked, — and in his blood she washed her feet
Who sat and saw men spill it; and this reward
Had this man of his dancing. For the next,
On him ye know what hand was last year laid, —
David, the close tongue of the Pope the hand
That held the key of subtle and secret craft
As of his viol, and tuned all strings of state
With cunning finger; not the foot of the king
Before God's ark when Michal mocked at him
Danced higher than this man's heart for confidence
To bring from Babylon that ark again
Which he that touches, he shall surely die, —
But not the death of Uzzah; for thereon
God's glory rests not, but the shadow of death,
And dead men's bones within it: yea his trust
Was to lift up again and to relume
The tabernacle of Moloch, and the star
Of Remphan, figures which our fathers made,
That such as he might go before, and play
On timbrels and on psalteries and on harps,
On cornets and on cymbals; and the Lord
Brake him; and she being wroth at God took thought
How they that saw might call his place of death
The breach of David, and her heart waxed hot
Till she should make a breach upon his foes
As God on him, and with a dire new name
And a new memory quite put out the name

nd memory of his slaying; yea, all this land,
hat hath seen evil of many men before
nd sins of many years, hath seen till now
o sin as hers, nor on her forefathers
Whose hands were red and their hearts hard hath seen
he note of such an evil as in her heart
ecame a fire conceiving, and brought forth
he deed that in her hand was as a sword
ew tempered in that fire. For no such deed
as this as all theirs who play false or slay,
ake gifts for whoredom, or lay snares to kill;
ut she gave gifts to hire her lover's knife
nat it might pierce her husband: even this land—
is earth whereof our living limbs are made,
is land renewed of God, this earth redeemed,
ith all souls born therein to worship him
at call it mother—was the hire she gave
fee the adulterer's hand when it should rise
ainst her lord to slay him; yea, all of you,
d each part of this kingdom, and each man
at but draws breath within her range of reign,
re parcel of this hire, as counted coins
make the sum up of her goodly gift.
ld he that of their hands was bought and sold,
r wedded husband, that had bowed his head
ore her worshipped idol,—think ye not
ut by her hand God gave him all his wage
o was a less thing in his eyes than she,
And viler than her service? for the fire
Fell not from heaven that smote him, yet not less
Was kindled of God's wrath than of man's hate,
And in a woman's craft his will put forth
To make her sin his judgment. But of these,
The slain and slayer, the spoiler and the spoiled,
That each have lain down by her wedded side,
Which will ye say hath slept within her bed
A sleep more cursed, and from more evil dreams
Found a worse waking? he that with a blast
Which rent the loud night as a cry from hell
Was blown forth darkling from her sheets, or he
That shared and soiled them till this day whereon
God casts him out upon the track of Cain
To flee forever with uncleansed red hands,
And seek and find not where in the waste world
To hide the wicked writing on his brow
Till God rain death upon him? for his foot,
Be sure, shall find no rest, his eye no sleep,
His head no covert and his heart no hope,
His soul no harbor and his face no light;
But as a hound the wolf that bleeds to death
God's wrath shall hunt him through the dark, and fear
Shall go before him as a cloud by day,
By night a fire, but comfort not his head
By day with shadow, nor with shine by night
Guide lest his foot be dashed against a stone,
But in fair heaven before the morning's face

Make his air thick with thunder, and put out
All lamplike eyes of stars that look on him,
Till he lie down blind in the dust, and die.
Or if God haply give his lightnings charge
They hurt him not, and bid his wind pass by
And the stroke spare him of the bolted cloud,
Then seeing himself cast out of all that live,
But not of death accepted, everywhere
An alien soul and shelterless from God,
He shall go mad with hate of his own soul,
Of God and man and life and death, and live
A loathlier life and deadlier than the worm's
That feeds on death, and when it rots from him
Curse God and die. Such end have these that loved;
And she that was beloved, what end shall she?
What think ye yet would God have done with her,
Who puts her in our hand to smite or spare
That hath done all this wickedness? For these,
What were they but as shadows in the sun
Cast by her passing, or as thoughts that fled
Across her mind of evil, types and signs
Whereby to spell the secret of her soul
Writ by her hand in blood? What power had they,
What sense, what spirit, that was not given of her,
Or what significance or shape of life
Their act or purpose, formless else and void,
Save as her will and present force of her
Gave breath to them and likeness? None of these
Hath done or suffered evil save for her,
Who was the spring of each man's dee
or doom
And root for each of death, and in h
hand
The sword to die by and the sword
slay.
Shall this be left, then, naked in th
world
For him that will to stab our peace
death?
What blood is this drips from th
point, what sign,
What scripture is enamelled on th
blade?
Lo, this fair steel forged only to divid
This land from truth, and cut her so
in twain,
To cleave the cords in sunder that ho
fast
Our hope to heaven and tie our trust
God, —
Here by the hilt we hold it, and we
know
That if we break not, this now blunte
edge,
Being newly ground and sharpened
men's hands
That watch if ours will yet loose ho
of it,
Shall pierce our own hearts throug
Ay, be ye sure,
If ye bid murder and adultery live,
They live not stingless; not a Scot th
breathes,
No man of you nor woman, but ha
part
In each her several sin and punishme
That ye take off from her. But wh
are these
That with their oaths or arms wou
fence her round,
And hide her from God's lightning
Know they not
— Or if they know not, will ye too
blind? —
What end that Lord who hath bow
so many a head,
So many and mighty, of those h
former friends,
Hath power to make of these me
Shall they stand,
Because they have done God servi
while they would,

And cease to serve him? or their good deeds past
Who served not God as Job forsooth for naught
Sustain their feet from falling? Strength nor craft,
Nor praise nor fear nor faith nor love of men,
Shall be for buckler to them, nor his name
A helm of vantage for the Douglas' head
If he make stiff against the yoke of God
Too proud a neck, that for the curb cast off
May feel the weight and edge that iron hath,
To check high minds and chasten; nor his wit
Nor subtle tongue shall be for Lethington
But as a pointless and unfeathered shaft
Shot heavenward without hurt, that falls again
In the archer's eye to pierce it; and his lips
That were so large of mockery when God spake,
By present organ of his works and wrath
And tongueless sound of justice audible,
Shall drink the poison of their words again,
And their own mocks consume them; and the mouth
That spat on Christ, now pleading for his foes,
Be stricken dumb as dust. Then shall one say,
Seeing these men also smitten, as ye now
Seeing them that bled before to do her good,
God is not mocked; and ye shall surely know
What men were these and what man he that spake
The things I speak now prophesying, and said
That if he spare to shed her blood for shame,
For fear or pity of her great name or face,
God shall require of you the innocent blood
Shed for her fair face' sake, and from your hands
Wring the price forth of her blood-guiltiness.
Nay, for ye know it, nor have I need again
To bring it in your mind if God ere now
Have borne me witness: in that dreary day
When men's hearts failed them for pure grief and fear
To see the tyranny that was, and rule
Of this queen's mother, where was no light left
But of the fires wherein his servants died,
I bade those lords that clave in heart to God,
And were perplexed with trembling and with tears,
Lift up their hearts, and fear not; and they heard
What some now hear no more, the word I spake
Who have been with them, as their own souls know,
In their most extreme danger: Cowper Moor,
Saint Johnston, and the Crags of Edinburgh,
Are recent in my heart; yea, let these know,
That dark and dolorous night wherein all they
With shame and fear were driven forth of this town
Is yet within my mind; and God forbid
That ever I forget it. What, I say,
Was then my exhortation, and what word
Of all God ever promised by my mouth
Is fallen in vain, they live to testify
Of whom not one that then was doomed to death
Is perished in that danger; and their foes,

How many of these hath God before their eyes
Plague-stricken with destruction! lo the thanks
They render him, now to betray his cause
Put in their hands to stablish; even that God's
That kept them all the darkness through to see
Light, and the way that some now see no more,
But are gone after light of the fen's fire,
And walk askant in slippery ways; but ye
Know if God's hand have ever when I spake
Writ liar upon me, or with adverse proof
Turned my free speech to shame; for in my lips
He put a word, and knowledge in my heart,
When I was fast bound of his enemies' hands
An oarsman on their galleys, and beheld
From off the sea whereon I sat in chains
The walls wherein I knew that I there bound
Should one day witness of him; and this pledge
Hath God redeemed not? Nay then, in God's name,
If that false word fell unfulfilled of mine,
Heed ye not now nor hear me when I say
That for this woman's sake shall God cut off
The hand that spares her as the hand that shields,
And make their memory who take part with her
As theirs who stood for Baal against the Lord
With Ahab's daughter; for her reign and end
Shall be like Athaliah's, as her birth
Was from the womb of Jezebel, that slew
The prophets, and made foul with blood and fire
The same land's face that now her seed makes foul
With whoredoms and with witchcrafts; yet they say
Peace, where is no peace, while the adulterous blood
Feeds yet with life and sin the murderous heart
That hath brought forth a wonder to the world
And to all time a terror; and this blood
The hands are clean that shed, and they that spare
In God's just sight spotted as foul as Cain's.
If then this guilt shall cleave to you or no,
And to your children's children; for her sake,
Choose ye; for God needs no man that is loath
To serve him, and no word but his own work
To bind and loose their hearts who hear and see
Such things as speak what I lack words to say.

First Citizen. She shall not live.

Second Citizen. If by their mouths to day
She be set free from death, then by our hands
She dies to-morrow.

Voices in the crowd. Nay, to fire with her!
Fire for the murderess! cast her bones in the lake!
Burn, burn and drown! She shall not live to-night.

SCENE VIII. — A ROOM IN THE PROVOST'S HOUSE.

The QUEEN, ATHOL, *and* MORTON.

Queen. I will not part from hence here will I see
What man dare do upon me.

Athol. Hear you not
How the cry thickens for your blood This night
Scarce has time left to save you.

Queen. I will die.
Morton. Madam, your will is no more now the sword
That cuts all knots in sunder: you must live,
And thank the force that would not give you leave
To give your foes the blood they seek to spill.
Here every hour's is as an arrow's flight
Winged for your heart; if in these clamorous walls
You see this darkness by the sun cast out,
You will not see his light go down alive.
Queen. What men are ye then, that have made my life
Safe with your oaths, that walled it round with words,
Fenced it with faith, and fortressed it with air
Made of your breaths and honors? When ye swore,
I knew the lie's weight on your lips, and took
My life into mine hand; I had no thought
To live or ride among you but to death,
And whither ye have led me, to what end,
For I nor God knows better than I knew
When when ye swore me safe; for then as now
I knew your faith was lighter than my life,
And my life's weight a straw's weight in the wind
Of your blown vows. Pledge me your faith to this,
That I shall die to-night if I go forth,
And if I stay live safe, and I will go
I trust to live, being here assured to die.
Morton. We swore to save you as you swore again
To cast the traitor from you, and divorce
Your hand forever from the blood on his;
And with that hand you wrote to him last night
Vows of your love and constant heart till death
As his true wife to serve and cleave to him.
The boy that should have borne your letter lacked
Faith to be trusty to your faithless trust,
And put it in our hand.
Queen. Why, so I thought:
I knew there was no soul between these walls,
Of child or man, that had more faith than ye
Who stand their noblest; nor shall one soul breathe,
If here ye put not out my present life,
When I come back, that shall not burn on earth
Ere hell take hold of it.
Morton. It is well seen,
Madam, that fear nor danger can pluck forth
Your tongue that strikes men mad with love or scorn,
Taunted or tempted; yet it shall not wrest
Death from men's hands untimely: what was sworn,
That you should live, shall stand; and that it may,
To-night must you part hence; this lord and I
Will bring you through to Holyrood afoot,
And be your warders from the multitude
As you pass forth between us; thence to Leith,
And there shall you take water, and ere dawn
Touch at Burntisland, whence some twenty miles
Shall bear you to Lochleven and safe guard
On the Fife border. He that has your charge
Is one not trusted more than tried of us,—
Sir William Douglas; in whose mother's ward

At Kinross there shall you abide what end
God shall ordain of troubles. At this need
No kindlier guard or trustier could secure
The life we pluck out of the popular mouth
That roars agape to rend it. You must go.
Queen. Must I not too go barefoot? Being your queen,
Ye do me too much grace: I should be led
In bonds between you, with my written sins
Pinned to my forehead, and my naked shame
Wrapt in a shameful sheet: so might I pass,
If haply I might pass at all alive
Forth of my people's justice, to salute
With seemly show of penance her chaste eyes
Whom ye have chosen for guard upon her queen
And daughter of the king her paramour,
Whose son being called my brother I must call,
Haply, to win her favor and her son's,
And her good word with him as mediatress,
My father's harlot mother. Verily,
Ye are worthy guardians of fair fame, and friends
Fit to have care of reputation, men
That take good heed of honor; and the state
That hath such counsellors to comfort it
Need fear no shame nor stain of such reproach
As makes it shrink when with her lords' good will,
Advised of all tongues near her and approved,
A queen may wed the worthiest born of men
Her subjects, and a warrior take to wife
One that being widowed of his hand and help
Were such a thing as I am. From my lord
I held my kingdom: now my hand lacks his,
What queen am I, and what slaves ye, that throng
And threat my life with vassals, to make vile
Its majesty foregone with abject fear
Of my most abject? Yet though I lack might
Save of a woman friendless and in bonds,
My name and place yet lack not, nor the state
And holy magic that God clothes withal
The naked word of king or queen, and keeps
In his own shadow, hallowed in his hand,
Such heads unarmed as mine, that men may smite
But no man can dis-hallow. In this faith,
Not to your faith I yield myself for fear,
But gladly to that God's who made of me
What ye nor no man mightier shall unmake,—
Your queen and mistress. Lead me through my streets,
Whose stones are tongues now crying for my blood,
To my dead fathers' palace, that hath oped
On many kings and traitors. It may be
I shall not see these walls and gates again
That cast me out; but if alive or dead
I come back ever to require my part
And place among my fathers, on my tomb
Or on my throne shall there stand graved for aye
The living word of this day's work and that
Which is to wreak me on it; and this town
Whence I go naked in mine enemies' hands
Shall be the flame to light men's eyes that read
What was endured and what revenged of me.

ACT V. — THE QUEEN.

Time: From July 20, 1567, to May 16, 1568.

SCENE I. — HOLYROOD.

MORTON *and* MAITLAND.

Morton. I know not yet if we did well to lay
No public note of murder on the queen
In this our proclamation that sets forth
But the bare justice of our cause, and right
We had to move against her; while her act
Stands yet unproven, and seen but by surmise, —
Though all but they that will not seem to know
May know the form and very life of it, —
She hath a sword against us and a stay
In the English hearts and envious hands that wait
To strike at us, and take her name to gild
And edge the weapon of their evil will
Who only are our enemies, and stand
Sole friends of hers on earth; for France, we see,
Will be no screen nor buckler for her, though
Fire were now lit to burn her body, or steel
Ground sharp to shear her neck: from Catherine's mouth
Had Murray not assurance, and from him
Have we not word that France will stir no foot
To save or spill her blood? England alone
By her new-lighted envoy sends rebuke
Made soft and mixed with promise and with pledge
Of help and comfort to her against our part
Who by this messenger imperiously
Are taxed and threatened as her traitors: this
Must we now answer with a brow as free
And tongue as keen, seeing how his queen in him
Desires the charge and wardship of our prince
Which we must nowise grant.

Maitland. For fear's sake, no,
Nor for her threats, which rather may pluck on
More present peril, of more fiery foot,
To the queen's life; yet surer might we stand
Having the crown's heir safe and girt about
With foreign guard in a strange land, than here
Rocked in the roar of factions, his frail head
Pillowed on death and danger; which once crushed,
And that thin life cut off, what hand puts forth
To take the crown up by successive right
But theirs that would even now dip violent hand
In the dear heart's blood of their kinswoman,
That it might take this kingdom by the throat
When she were slain? and rather by our mean
Would they procure her slaying than by their own
Make swift the death which they desire for her,
And from our hands with craft would draw it down
By show of friendship to her and threat of arms
That menace us with mockery and false fear
Of her deliverance by their swords, whose light
Being drawn and shining in our eyes should scare
Our hearts with doubt of what might fall if she
Stood by their help rekingdomed, and impel
Even in that fear our hands to spill her blood
That lag too long behind their wish, who wait

Till seeing her slain of us they may rise up
Heirs of her cause and lineage, and reclaim
By right of blood and justice and revenge
The crown that drops from Stuart to Hamilton
With no more let or thwart than a child's life
Whose length should be their pleasure's: and with these
Against our cause will England league herself
If yet the queen live prisoner of our hands,
And these her kin draw swords for her; but they,
Though England know not of it, nor have eye
To find their drift, would mix their cause with ours,
If from the queen's head living we should pluck
The royal office, and as next in blood
Instate them regents; who would reign indeed
Rather by death's help, if they might, and build
On her child's grave and hers their regency,
Than rule by deputation; yet at need
Will be content by choice or leave of us
To take the delegated kingdom up
And lack but name of king: which being installed
I doubt they think not long to lack, or live
Its patient proxies ever. So the land,
Shaken and sundered, looks from us to these,
From these again to us-ward, and hears blown
Upon the light breath of the doubtful hour
Rumors of fear which swell men's hearts with wrath
To hear of southern wars and counsels hatched
That think with fright to shrink them up, and bind
Their blood's course fast with threats. Let England know,
Her menace that makes cold no vein of ours
May heat instead the centre and the core
Of this land's pulse with fire, and in that flame
The life we seek not and the crown it wears
Consume together. France will rest our friend,
Whether the queen find grace to live in bonds,
Or bleed beneath our judgment; he that comes
On errand thence to reconcile with us
Her kin that stand yet on the adverse part
Hath but in charge to do her so much good
As with our leave he may, and break no bond
That holds us firm in friendship; if we will,
She may be held in ward of France, and live
Within the bound there of a convent wall
Till death redeem her; but howe'er he speed
Who hath commission with what power he may
To make of our twain factions one such league
As may stand fast and perfect friend with France,
And in what wise by grace of us he may
To do our prisoner service and entreat
That grace to drop upon her, this main charge
He needs must keep, to hold allied in one
Scotland and France, and let our hand not plight
Fresh faith instead with England; so for us
From France looks forth no danger though she die,
For her no help; and these void English threats,
That bring no force to back them but their own

And find not us unfriended, do but blow
The embers that her life still treads upon
Which being enkindled shall devour it.
Morton. Ay,
And each day leaves them redder from the breath
That through the land flies clamorous for her blood
From lips which boast to bear upon them laid
The live coal burning of the word that God
Gives them to speak against her; the south towns
Are full of tongues that cry on our delay
To purge the land plague-stricken with her life;
He first who never feared the face of man,
John Knox, and Craig his second, fill men's ears
With words as arrows edged and winged to slay;
And all the wide-mouthed commons, and more loud
The women than their men, stretch their shrill throats
With cries for judgment on her: and herself,
As parcel of the faction for her death,
Takes part with them against her friends, and swears
To the English envoy who was charged by stealth
To plead with her for mercy on her life
And privily persuade her, as we find,
To cast out Bothwell from her secret thought,
She would die first ere so divorce her soul
From faith and hope that hangs on him, and feeds
Her constant spirit with comfort which sustains
His child alive within her; for she thinks
Haply to move men's hearts even by the plea
That hardens them against her, being believed,
For the false fruit's sake of her fatal womb,
The seed of Bothwell, that with her should burn
Rather than bring forth shame, and in this land
Become a root of wars unborn and fire
Kindled among our children.
Maitland. Nay, this plea
Can be but somewhile to defend her life,
And put back judgment: never could she think,
Though love made witless whom the world found wise,
His seed might reign in Scotland.
Morton. We are not
So barren of our natural brood of kings
As to be grafted from so vile a stock,
Though he were now cut off who grows yet green
Upon the stem so shaken and pierced through
With cankers now that gnaw the grain away.
Nor if the child whom, whatsoe'er he be,
We for the kingdom's comfort needs must seem
To take for true-begotten, and receive
As issued of her husband's kingly blood,
Should live not to take up with timely hand
The inheritance whereto we hold him born;
Should the crown therefore by his death derive
To the queen's kin, or hand of Hamilton
Assume the state and sway that slides from his, —
His father hath a brother left alive,
The younger son of Lennox, who might put
More hopefully his nephew's title on
Than leave it for the spoil of hungry hands
That would make war upon our present state,
Unseat the rule of stablished things, unmake
The counsel and the creed whereby we stand,

And Scotland with us, firm of foot and free
Against the whole face of the weaponed world:
But this boy's crown shall be a golden ring
To hoop and hold our state and strength in one,
And with the seemly name of king make sure
The rent bulk of our laboring commonwealth,
And solder its flawed sides; his right of reign
Is half our gift who reign in him, and half
His heritage of blood, whose lineal name
Shall not by note of usurpation strike
With strangeness or offence the world's wide ear
That hears a Stuart our prince's uncle crowned
In the dead child's succession, and this state
Made safe in him and stable to sustain
What chance abroad may range or breed at home
Of force to shake it.
Maitland. While the child lives yet,
A nearer hope than of his father's kin
Looks fairer on us; yet in that life's wreck
This rope might hold at need.
Morton. Ay, or we fall,
Who stand against the house of Hamilton
In this man's name, — his kinsman Ruthven, Mar,
Myself and Athol, who sustain his cause
Against their part alone.
Maitland. So do you well;
Yet had I rather on the queen's appeal,
In her dead father's and her young child's name
Pleading for life, with proffer to resign
Her kingdom to the council's hands or his
Whom it may mark for regent, she might live
Even yet our titular queen, and in her name
The council govern of our trustiest heads:
While in safe ward of England or of France,
Far from his kindred, might her son grow safe,
And under strange and kindlier suns his strength
Wax ripe to bear a kingdom. To this end,
Save Bothwell's life I see no present let,
Who lives her shame and danger, but being slain
Takes off from her the peril of men's tongues,
And her more perilous love that while he lives
It seems will never slacken till her life
Be made a prey for his, but in his death
Dies, or lives stingless after: wherefore most
It now imports us to lay hand on him,
And on that capture to proclaim divorce
Between them ere he die, as presently
His death should seal it and his blood subscribe.
So might she live, and bring against our cause
No blame of men or danger.
Morton. In my mind,
Better it were to crown her son for king,
And send her for safe keeping hence in guard
To live in England prisoner, while we stand
As safe from her as blameless of her blood,
Who reigning but in name on us should reign
Indeed on all our enemies' hopes, and turn
From us the hopeless hearts of half our friends
For the bare name's sake of her seeming reign
And mask of false-faced empire.
Maitland. As I think,
The main mind of the council will not bend
To any reason on our parts proposed

For her removal hence or titular reign,
Nor with the breath of our advice be blown
Beside their purpose. If the queen consent
That her son's head be hallowed with her crown,
And hers he bare before him, she shall live,
And that close record of her secret hand,
The proofs and scriptures in her casket locked
That seal her part in Darnley's blood-shedding,
Shall yet lie dumb in darkness; else, I dread,
She shall be tried by witness in them writ,
And each word there be clamorous on men's tongues
As the doom uttered of her present death.
And not more instant should her judgment be
Than her swift execution; for they think,
I know, to find no safety while she lives;
So that in no case shall she pass alive
Out of this realm while power is in their lips
To speed or stay her.

Morton. They shall never think
To set before all eyes the whole tale forth
In popular proof and naked evidence
To plead against her: Balfour, that betrayed
Her counsels to us, should then have done more scathe
Than ever he did service. They must know
It were not possible to let this proof
Stand in the sun's sight, and such names be read
Our partners of her deed and not her doom
As Huntley's and Argyle's. Have they not heard —
What should suffice to show if there be cause
To seal some part yet of this secret up —
How dearly Bothwell held those privy scrolls
Preserved as witness to confound at need
The main part of his judges, and abash
Their sentence with their clear complicity
In the crime sentenced? yea, so dear a price
He set on these, that flying for life he sends
Dalgleish his trustiest servant from Dunbar
To bring again from Balfour's hands to his
The enamelled casket in whose silver hold
Lay the queen's letters and the bond subscribed
Which at Craigmillar writ a live man dead.
This was a smooth and seasonable hour
For one of so soft spirit and tender heart
To send and seek, for love of good days gone,
A love-gift that his lady brought from France
To hold sweet scents or jewels; and the man
That to his envoy so delivered it,
And sent our council warning to waylay
And where to intercept it, — this was one
Meet for such trust and amorous offices,
Balfour, that, yielding us the castle up,
Yields likewise for a sword into our hands
To take by stroke of justice the queen's life
His witness with what words she tempted him
From her own lips, how lovingly and long,
To kill her husband; yet he durst not; then
How at her bidding he might well take heart,

She said, to do it; yet he stood fearful off;
Whereat she brake into a glimmering wrath
That called him coward, and bade him live assured,
If his tongue ever let this counsel forth,
By her sure mean and suddenly to die.
Maitland. This were a sword to drink her life indeed,
But that my hope is better of the lords
Than that their heart is fixed upon her death;
And for the commons and their fiery tongue,
The loud-lipped pilot of their windy will,
This famine of their anger shall feed full,
And slake its present need but with the spoil
Made of the piteous remnants of her faith
By the stout hand here of their friend Glencairn,
Who from this chapel of her palace rends
All holy ornament, grinds down with steel
The images whereon Christ dies in gold,
Unsanctifies her sovereign sanctuary,
Unmoulds her God, and mints and marks him new,
And makes his molten chalices run down
Into strange shape and service: this should ease,
Meseems, the hunger of the hate they bear
That creed for which they held her first in hate.
And, for the secular justice to be done
For his death's sake whom all these loathed alive,
It should content them that the trial has passed
On those we held in hand, and by this test
The man whose marriage masque on that loud night
Was pretext for the queen to lie apart
From the near danger of her husband's bed,
Sebastian, stands approved as innocent
And no part of her purpose; while the twain
Who bore the charge that was to load with death
The secret house, and to their master's hands
Consigned the mean of murder, have endured
The perfect proof of torture, and confessed
In the extreme pang of evidence enforced
The utmost of their knowledge.
Morton. These may serve
To allay men's instant angers; but much more
His face should profit us whom France detains
With suit and proffer from the queen-mother
With all their force and flower of war or craft
To help him to the crown of his own land,
Or throne at least of regency therein,
If he will take but France for constant friend,
And turn our hearts with his from England: this
Would Catherine give him for his friendship's sake
Who gives her none for all this, but his hope
Cleaves yet to England, though for fraud or fear
Again it fail him. So being foiled and wroth,
He hath, she tells him, a right English heart,
And in that faith withholds him craftily
From his desired departure and return,
Which should be more of all this land desired
Than of himself. This Elphinstone that comes
For him from Paris, in his master's name
To plead as in her brother's for the queen,

Bears but the name of Murray in his mouth,
Whose present eye and tongue, whose spirit and mind,
Our need of him requires. When their intent
hall by the lords in council be made known
To him that stands here for Elizabeth,
How in her name will he receive the word
That but from Murray's lip she thinks to hear,
nd then determine with what large response
or peace or war she may resolve herself?
Maitland. If she shall find our council one in will
o shed by doom of judgment the queen's blood,
ven by Throgmorton's mouth I am certified
hat she will call on France to strike with her
or this their sister's sake, and join in one
neir common war to tread our treason down;
, if she find not aid of France, from Spain
ill she seek help to hold our French allies
ith curb and snaffle fast of Spanish steel,
or fear their powers against her lend us might
uat would not lend against us; she meantime,
hile Philip's hand hath France as by the hair,
all loosen on us England, to redeem
uat forfeit life which till the day of fight
er trust is but in Murray to preserve,
ising he spake never word in English ear
ainst this queen his sister.
Morton. Being returned,
shall bear witness if his heart be bent
ther to this queen's love or that queen's fear
Than to the sole weal of his natural land,
That hath more need he should take thought for her
Than one of these or the other. If the lords
Be purposed, as I guess, to bid the queen,
Ere this month end, make choice of death or life, —
To live uncrowned, and call her young son king,
Or die by doom attainted, — none but he
By her submission or her death must rise
Regent of Scotland; and each hour that flits
With louder tongue requires him, and rebukes
His tardiness of spirit or foot to flee
By swift and private passage forth of France
To where our hearts wait that have need of him.

Scene II. — Lochleven Castle.

The Queen *and* Mary Beaton.

Queen. I would I knew, before this day be dead,
If I must live or die. Why art thou pale?
It seems thou art not sad, though I sit here,
And thou divide my prison; for I see
Thine eye more kindled, and thy lip more calm,
And hear thy voice more steadfast, than it was
When we were free of body: then the soul
Seemed to sit heavy in thee, and thy face
Was as a water's wearied with the wind,
Dim eye and fitful lip, whereon thy speech
Would break and die untimely. Do these walls,
And that wan wrinkling water at their foot,

For my sake please thee? Thou shouldst love me well,
Or hate, I know not whether, if to share
The cup wherein I drink delight the lip
That pledges in it mine.
Mary Beaton. If I be pale,
For fear it is not, nor for discontent,
Here to sit bounded: I could well be pleased
To shoot my thoughts no farther than this wall
That is my body's limit, and to lead
My whole life's length as quiet as we sit
Till death fulfilled all quiet, did I know
There were no wars without, nor days for you
Of change and many a turbulent chance to be
Whence I must not live absent.
Queen. Hast thou part,
Think'st thou, as in time past, predestinate
In all my days and chances?
Mary Beaton. Yea, I know it.
Queen. If thou have grace to prophesy, perchance
Canst thou tell too how I shall fare forth hence,—
If quick or dead? I had rather so much know
Than if thou love or hate me.
Mary Beaton. Truly, then,
My mind forecasts with no great questioning
You shall pass forth alive.
Queen. What, to my death?
Mary Beaton. To life, and death that comes of life at last:
I know not when it shall.
Queen. I would be sure
If our good guardian know no more than thou:
I think she should; yet if she knew I think
I should not long desire to know as much,
But the utmost thing that were of her foreknown
Should in mine eye stand open.
Mary Beaton. She is kind.
Queen. I would she were a man that had such heart:
So might it do me service.
Mary Beaton. So it may.
Queen. How? in her son? Ay, haply, could I bring
Mine own heart down to feed their hearts with hope,
They might grow great enough to do me good.
I tell thee yet, I thought indeed to die
When I came hither. 'Tis but five weeks gone,—
Five, and two days: I keep the count of days
Here; I can mind the smell of the moist air
As we took land, and when we got to horse
I thought I never haply might ride more,
Nor hear a hoof's beat on the glad green ground,
Nor feel the free steed stretch him to the way,
Nor his flank bound to bear me: then meseemed
Men could not make me live in prison long;
It were unlike my being, out of my doom;
Free should I live, or die. Then came these walls,
And this blind water shuddering at the sun,
That rose ere we had ten miles ridden; and here
The black boat rocked that took my feet off shore,
And set them in this prison; and as I came
The honey-heavy heather touched my sense
Well-nigh to weeping: I did think to die,
And smell naught sweeter than the naked grave.
Yet sit we not among the worms and roots,
But can see this much,—from the round tower here,
The square walls of the main tower opposite,

And the bare court between; a gracious sight.
Yet did they not so well to let me live,
If they love life too; I will find those friends
That found these walls and fears to fence me with
A narrower lodging than this seven feet's space
That yet I move in, where nor lip nor limb
Shall breathe or move forever.
Mary Beaton. Do you think
You shall not long live bound?
Queen. Impossible.
I would have violent death, or life at large;
And either speedy. Were it in their mind
To slay me here and swiftly, as I thought,
Thou wouldst not here sit by their leave with me:
They get not so much grace who are now to die,
And could not need it; yet I have heard it said
The headsman grants what sort of grace he may —
A grievous grace — to one about to bleed
That asks some boon before his neck lie down;
Thy face was haply such a boon to me,
Being cradle-fellows and fast-hearted friends,
To see before I died, and this the gift
Given of my headsmen's grace: what think'st thou?
Mary Beaton. Nay,
That I know naught of headsmen.
Queen. Thou hast seen —
It is a sharp, strange thing to see men die.
I have prayed these men for life, thou knowest, — have sent
Prayers in my son's and my dead father's name,
Their kings that were and shall be, and men say
One was well loved of the people, and their love
Is good to have, a goodly stay — and yet
I do not greatly think I fear to die.
I would not put off life yet; if I live,
For one thing most shall these men pay me dear, —
That I was ever touched with fear of death.
Thou hast heard how seeing a child on the island once,
Strayed over from the shore, I cried to him
Through the pierced wall, between five feet of stone,
To bid my friends pray God but for my soul,
My body was worth little; and they thought
I was cast down with bitter dread of heart:
Please God, for that will I get good revenge.
I dream no more each night now on my lord,
And yet God knows how utterly I know
I would be hewn in pieces — yea, I think —
Or turned with fire to ashes for his sake:
Surely I would.
Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.
Lady Lochleven. Good morrow to your grace.
Queen. Good madam, if the day be good or no
Our grace can tell not; while our grace had yet
The grace to walk an hour in the sun's eye
With your fair daughters and our bed-fellows
About your battlements that hold us fast,
Or breathe outside the gateway where our foot
Might feel the terrace under, we might say
The morn was good or ill: being here shut up,
We make no guesses of the sun, but think
To find no more good morrows.

Lady Lochleven. Let your grace
Chide not in thought with me; for this restraint,
That since your late scarce intercepted flight
Has been imposed upon me, from my heart
I think you think that I desired it not.
Queen. Ay, we were fools, we Maries twain, and thought
To be into the summer back again,
And see the broom blow in the golden world, —
The gentle broom on hill. For all men's talk
And all things come and gone yet, yet I find
I am not tired of that I see not here, —
The sun, and the large air, and the sweet earth,
And the hours that hum like fire-flies on the hills
As they burn out and die, and the bowed heaven,
And the small clouds that swim and swoon i' the sun,
And the small flowers. Now should I keep these things
But as sweet matter for my thoughts in French.
To set them in a sonnet: here at home
I read too plain in our own tongue my doom,
To see them not, and love them. Pardon me:
I would have none weep for me but my foes,
And then not tears. Be not more discontent
Than I to think that you could deem of me
As of one thankless; who were thankless found,
Not knowing that by no will or work of yours
I sit suppressed thus from the sun: 'tis mine,
My fault that smites me; and my masters' will,
Not mine or yours, it is, that for my fault
Devised this penance; which on me wrought out
May fall again on them.

Lady Lochleven. Madam, alas!
I came on no such errand to your grace
As lacked more words to make it sad than those
It was to speak; and these have I put back
Too long and idly. Here are now at gate
Three messengers sent from the parliament
To speak with you.
Queen. With us to speak? you know,
Nor chamberlain nor herald have we here
To marshal men before us. Let them come,
Whom all our kingdom left could keep not out
From this high presence-chamber. Stay: I would not
Be stricken unaware, nor find in you
That which I thought not; it were out of kind,
Unwomanlike, to give me to their hands
Who came to slay me, knowing not why they came;
Is it for that?
Lady Lochleven. God's grace forbid it! nay —
Queen. I ask if they bring warrant for my death?
I have seen such things and heard, since leaves bloomed last,
That this were no such marvellous thing to hear.
But if this be, before I speak with them,
I will know first.
Lady Lochleven. Let not your highness dread —
Queen. I do not bid you put me out of dread.
Have you not heard, and hear? The queen desires
To know of her born subject till she die,
And keeper of her prison, if these men
Be come to slay her.
Lady Lochleven. They come to bid your grace —
Queen. Bid my grace do their bidding? that is like:

That I should do it were unlike. I must live,
I see, this some while yet. What men are these?
Lady Lochleven. The first, Sir Robert Melville; then the lords
Ruthven and Lindsay.
Queen. Bid my first friend in,
While one friend may be bidden; he, I think,
Can come but friendlike.
[*Exit* LADY LOCHLEVEN.
What should these desire?
One head of theirs I swore last month to have,
That then beheld me, some day, if that hand
Whereon I swore should take not first my life.
And one, the son of him that being nigh dead
Rose from his grave's edge to pluck down alive
A murdered man before him, — what should he
Bring less than murder, being his father's son,
In such a hand as his that stabbed my friend?
Mary Beaton. Perchance they come to take your crown, not life.
Queen. What, my name too? but till I yield it them,
They have but half the royal thing they hold,
The state they ravish; and they shall not have
My name but with my life; while that sits fast,
As in my will it sits, I am queen, and they
My servants yet that fear to take my life;
For so thou seest they fear; and I did ill,
That in first sight of present-seeming death
Made offer to resign into their hands
What here is mine of empire: I shall live,
And being no queen I live not.
Enter SIR ROBERT MELVILLE.
Welcome, sir;
I have found, since ever times grew strange with me,
Good friends of your good brother and yourself,
And think to find. What errand have you hero?
Sir R. Melville. Let not your majesty cast off the thought
Which calls me friend, though I be first to bear
An evil errand. 'Tis the council's mind
That you shall live, and in their hand the proofs
Shall die that plead against you —
Queen. Is this ill?
I know not well what proof that man could show
Would prove men honest that make war on faith,
Show treason trusty, bleach rebellion white,
Bid liars look loyal; and much less I know
What proof might speak against me from their lips
Whose breath may kill and quicken evidence,
Or what good change of mind rebuke the lie
That lived upon them; but that I must live,
And of their proofs unspotted, sounds not worse
Than if a friend had come to bear me word
That I must die belied.
Sir R. Melville. Upon these terms
Are they content for you to live in ward: —
That you yield up as with free hand the crown
And right of kingdom to your son, who straight
At Stirling shall receive it from their hands;
Else shall your grace be put to trial, and bear
The doom ensuing, with what of mortal weight
May hang upon that sentence.
Queen. Sir, methought
This word of doom for shame's sake now was dead

Even in their mouths that first it soiled, and made
Even shamelessness astonished; not again
We thought to hear of judgment, we that are,
While yet we are any thing, and yet must be,
The voice which deals, and not the ear which takes,
Judgment. God gave man might to murder me,
Who made me woman, weaker than a man;
But God gave no man right, I think, to judge,
Who made me royal. Come then, I will die:
I did not think to live. Must I die here?
Sir R. Melville. Madam, my errand —
Queen. Ay, sir, is received
Here in my heart: I thank you; but you know
I had no hope before; yet sounds it strange
That should not sound, to die at such men's hands,
A queen, and at my years. Forgive me, sir:
Me it not comforts to discomfort you,
Who are yet my friend — as much as man on earth —
If any, you — that come to bid me die.
Sir R. Melville. Be not cast down so deep: I have an errand
From the English queen, your friend, and here ensheathed
By my sword's secret side, for your fair hand
A letter writ from her ambassador
Praying you subscribe what thing my comrades will,
Since naught whereto your writing was compelled
Can hang hereafter on you as a chain
When but for this bond written you stand free.
Queen. Ay, I know that: how speaks Elizabeth?
Sir R. Melville. She bids you at all times account of her
As a sure friend and helpful; has, I know,
Indeed no mind to fail you.
Queen. This your comfort
Is no small comfort to me; I had rather
Be bounden to her than any prince alive.
Is it her counsel, then, that I subscribe
My traitors' writing? I will do it. But, sir,
Of those that sit in state in Edinburgh
Which was it chose you for my comforter?
I know my lord of Morton would send none;
It was the secretary?
Sir R. Melville. Madam, the same.
Queen. Did I not well then, think you, when I cast
This body of mine between him and the swords
That would have hewn his body? I did think
He was my friend. Bid now mine enemies in,
And I will sign what sort of shame they will,
And rid them hence.
Enter LINDSAY *and the younger* RUTHVEN.
'Tis five weeks gone, my lord, [*To* LINDSAY.
Since last we looked on you; for you, fair sir, [*To* RUTHVEN.
A year I think and four good months are sped
Since, at that father's back whose name you bear,
I saw your face dashed red with blood. My lords,
Ye come to treat with us ambassadors
Sent from our subjects; and we cannot choose,
Being held of them in bonds from whom ye come,
But give you leave to speak.
Lindsay. Thus, briefly, madam: —
If you will live to die no death by doom,
This threefold bond of contract that we bring

equires your hand; wherein of your free will
irst must you yield the crown of Scotland up
o your child's hand; then by this second deed
he place and name of regent through this realm
o the earl of Murray shall you here assign,
r, if he list not take this coil in hand,
hen to the council; last, this deed empowers
ne lords of Mar and Morton with myself
o set the crown upon the young king's head.
ese shall you sign.
Queen. These I shall sign, or die.
it hear you, sirs: when hither you brought these,
rned not your hearts within you by the way
inking how she that should subscribe was born
ng James's daughter? that this shameful hand,
to sustain nor sword nor staff o' the realm,
th the blood in it of those years of kings
at tamed the neck and drove with spurs the sides
this beast people that now casts off me?
this that is to sign, no hand but this
obs with their sole inheritance of life
o held with bit and bridle this bound land,
I made it pace beneath them. What are ye
it I should tell you so, whose fathers fought
eath my fathers? Where my grandsire fell,
all this land about him, were there none
t bore on Flodden, sirs, such names as yours,
I shamed them not? Heard no men past of lords,
That for the king's crown gave their crown of life
For death to harry? Did these grieve or grudge
To be built up into that bloody wall
That could not fence the king? Were no dead found
Of that huge cirque wherein my grandsire lay,
But of poor men and commons? Yea, my lords,
I think the sires that bred you had not heart
As men have writ of them, but sent to fight
For them their vassals visored with their crests,
And these did well, and died, and left your sires
That hid their heads forever and lived long,
The name and false name of their deeds and death.
How should their sons else, how should ye, being born,
If born ye be, not bastards, of those lords
Who gat this lying glory to be called
Loyal, and in the reek of a false field
To fall so for my fathers, — how, I say,
Dare sons of such come hither, how stand here,
From off the daughter's head of all those kings
To pluck the crown that on my fathers' heads
Ye say they died to save? I will not sign:
No, let some Flodden sword dip in my blood;
Here I sit fast, and die. — Good friend that was,
[*To* Sir R. Melville.
Tell my great sister that you saw my hand
Strive, and leave off to sign: I had no skill
To shape false letters.
Ruthven. Madam, no man here
But knows by heart the height of your stout words
And strength of speech or sweetness; all this breath

Can blow not back the storm yourself raised up,
Whose tempest shakes the kingdom from your hand,
And not men's hate. You have been loved of men;
All faith of heart, all honor possible,
While man might give, men gave you. Now those deeds
Which none against your will enforced you do
Have set that spirit against you in men's minds,
That till you die (as then your memory may),
Nor your fair beauty nor your fiery heart
Can lay with spells asleep.
Sir R. Melville (*aside*). I pray you, madam,
Think on mine errand.
Queen. Wherefore should I sign?
If I be queen that so unqueen myself,
What shall it profit me to give my foes
This one thing mine that hallows me, this name,
This royal shadow? If I be no queen,
Let me bleed here; as being uncrowned I know
That I shall die of all your promises.
Lindsay. We came not, madam, to put force on you,
And save your life by violence; but take note,
[*Laying his hand on her arm.*
As in this hand your own is fast, and hath
No power till mine give back its power again
To strive or sign, so fast are you in ward,
For life or death, of them that bid you live
And be no queen, or die.
Queen. I thank you, sir,
That of your love and courtesy have set
This knightly sign upon my woman's flesh
For proof if I be queen or no, that bear
Such writing on my body of men's hands
To seal mine abdication. Sirs, read here:
What need I sign again? Here may men see
If she be queen of Scotland on whose arm
Are writ such scriptures as I wist not yet
Men's eyes might read on any woman born.
Yet will I write, being free, to assure myself
This is my hand indeed that wears the sign
Which proves it vassal to the stronger. Sirs,
Take back your papers; and albeit, my lord,
The conquest you have made of me, henceforth
Lift up your heart with pride, I pray you yet,
Boast not yourself on women overmuch,
Lest being their conqueror called, and praised for that,
Men call you too their tyrant. Once and twice
Have we grasped hands: the third time they shall cross
Must leave one cold forever. Nay, I pray,
Who may command not surely, yet I pray,
Speak not, but go: ye have that ye came for; go,
And make your vaunt to have found so meek a thing
As would yield all, and thank you.
[*Exeunt* LINDSAY, RUTHVEN, *and* SIR R. MELVILLE.
Hast thou read
Of sick men healed with baths of children's blood?
I must be healed of this my plague of shame,
This sickness of disgrace they leave with me,
Bathing in theirs my body.
Mary Beaton. In such streams
You have washed your hands already.
Queen. What, in war?
Ay, there I have seen blood shed for me, and yet

Vept not nor trembled; if my heart
shrink now,
t is for angry pity of myself
hat I should look on shame.
Mary Beaton. What shame, my
queen?
Queen. Thy queen? why, this, that I,
queen once of Scots,
m no more now than thine. Call
back the lords:
will unsign their writing, and here die;
were the easier end.
Mary Beaton. It is your will —
orgive me, madam — on this cause
again
o grapple with Lord Lindsay?
Queen. True, not yet;
hou thought'st to make me mad,
remembering that;
ut it hath made me whole. My wits
are sound,
emembering I must live. When I
have slept,
ay I would gladly see the kindlier
face
gain of our dear hostess with her son
o put those angry eyes out of my
sight
hat lightened late upon me; say, being
sad,
nd (if thou wilt) being frighted, I
must find
he comfortable charities of friends
ore precious to me. 'Tis but truth,
I am fain,
ing tired, to sleep an hour: mine
eyes are hot;
here tears will come not, fire there
breeds instead,
hou knowest, to burn them through.
Let me lie down;
will expect their comforts in an hour.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — HOLYROOD.

MAITLAND *and* SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON.

Throgmorton. Why would your council give no ear to me
e they rode hence so hot to crown
their prince?
hy hear not first one word?

Maitland. One threat the more
From your queen's lips bequeathed by
rote to yours,
Or one more promise? If we run her
course,
This queen will leave us in the briers,
we know,
There to lie fast or labor till the thorns
Have rent our flesh and raiment.
Throgmorton. Sir, take thought
If help were sent not at the siege of
Leith,
When France had grasped you by the
throat, and sea
To land gave battle, from that sovereign's hand
Whom now ye trust not.
Maitland. Ay, for her own ends
She cast the French out, and flung back
their power
Which here was deadly to her, and of
that deed
Had recompense with surety: but what
aid
Must we now look for of her, on whose
will
Hang all our enemies' hopes? I would
I had been
Banished seven years my country, and
your queen
On that condition had but as a friend
Dealt freely with us. Let her now
proclaim,
Her own seed failing, this our prince
her heir,
And England shall no less have care of
him
Than we his lineal servants; else, if
hence
We yield him to your keeping, men
will say
We have given our natural master to
be kept
As among wolves a sheep, and made
our hope
The fosterling of danger: and small
trust
Should we put in her that has newly
dealt
By secret message to subvert our state,
We know, with those indeed of our
queen's kin
From whose report we know it.

Throgmorton. What have they said?
Maitland. That you brought proffers of her aid and love
To incite their arms, to quicken the slow snake
Whose sting lies cold yet in their policy,
But watched and warmed of her with hand and eye
The perfect poison should put forth, and thrust
At once the hot and cloven tongue of war
Even in our face and bosom; but for fear,
It may be, or being yet at heart's root Scots, —
For this or that cause, through false heart or true,
So is it, that in doubt of your good mind
Toward them or Scotland, in whose breast you sought
To make the mutual swords of her own sons
Clash as they crossed once more, drinking her blood,
They sent us word of all your embassy.
Throgmorton. But you, whate'er these thought or feigned to think,
Think no such foolish evil as fools may, —
Deem not of England as the Scot who deems
She hath no will, no line of life, no hope,
No thought but Scotland's ruin, and our queen
No sense of aught here done, — her sister's doom,
The people's rage, the council's purpose, — naught
But where to find in these a guileful mean
To strike at Scotland? why, these fears are old,
White-bearded dreams, suspicions long grown gray,
Dangers and doubts toothless and eyeless now
That fright nor babe nor dotard; and your thought
Finds room for such? What profit should she have
To turn your swords against each other's throats,
And pick some privy chance of vantage up
That fell between your factions at her feet?
Such chance indeed of vantage might there fall
For your own queen, who nowise has been slow
To nurse the chance, and wait on it and serve,
From strifes rekindled and requickening claims
Set each at each in England, whence or craft
Or force might filch or seize for Scotland's sake
Some no less jewel than her eye ere now
Was fixed so fast on, even the crown that hangs
In doubt yet of unsure inheritance,
As hangs not yours for us to pluck at who,
Reign whoso may when this queen's life is quenched,
In Scotland shall reign never.
Maitland. That I know,
And this no less: that he who reign shall reign
Never by right of England's leave or love,
Her ward or servant; as, this queen removed,
Haply ye hope her lineal heir might be,
And in that hope work with these Hamiltons
To strike at us in Mary's name, and pluck
Death from our hands upon her; your queen,
And they her kinsfolk, all ye seek her death;
No word but of her freedom in your mouths,
No end than this less looked for in your hearts.
Speak to the council as but now to me
Defy them in her cause, not all the world
For three days' space shall save her.

Throgmorton. Nay, not we
Desire the queen's death at your hand provoked,
But here from Tullibardine's mouth I know
Her kin at secret heart desire no less;
And will ye but allow their house its right
By heritage to reign, no need, they say,
To take more care for her, who privily
May be put out of life, and no man more
In that dead name be troubled; and again,
If they with no such promise being assured
Shall not join hands with you, and England then
Shall bring the queen back whom ye spared to slay,
Ye are lost, and they not winners. Therefore is it
That of Lord Mar and of yourself I seek
Help for the queen's deliverance, who being dead
Can profit no man but your foes and ours
That love not England more than they love you,
Nor you than they love England: shall not both
With their own cause take part?
Maitland. It is too late;
What part should we take with you, to what end,
Since all the council knows your traffic now
With their chief foes, and how being there betrayed
You can but bring us such a friendship back
As they would none of?
Throgmorton. Sir, if yet you fear,
If you suspect yet that our queen desires
To speed the death of yours or make it sure
By pleading for her, or by threat of war
Denounced for her sake, let this letter be
The seal and warrant of our single heart,
Wherein she threatens war, — but smile not yet, —
If in his mother's name for him discrowned
Ye crown the child that has but wailed one year.
This should the lords have seen; but even for doubt
Lest it should set their spirits on such fire
As but her blood shed presently could slake,
And this be deemed its aim indeed at heart
And privy purpose of her hand who writ,
Your eye alone must read that reads it now
And the lord Murray's; for they know that send,
And with it send me this for secret charge,
They know the truth and heat of fiery will
That urges our queen's heart upon this war,
And for no end but for her sake who sits
Held fast in bonds of her own subjects born,
And with her all the majesty on earth
That walks with monarchs, and no king alive
But wears some shameful parcel of her chain.
Maitland. Though this be truth, yet they that hold it false
Will join in wrath with them that hold it true,
Even for the threat's sake and for shame, will join
To write red answer in the slain queen's blood
Back to the queen that threatens. Nay, herself
Who sits in bonds yet of us will not yield
To come forth singly safe, nor give consent
That Bothwell should fare worse than she, or have
More harm or danger; and being thus incensed,

A three-edged weapon in the council's hand
Is drawn to smite at need, a treble charge
Whereon to impeach her: on that statute first
Made of this land's religion seven years since,
Which though she signed not, yet its breach in her
Shall stand for guilt before them; and thereto
Shall she be challenged of incontinence
With more than Bothwell, who by noteless nights
Have made her bed adulterous, and of each
The proof that seals her shame in him, they say,
Lies in their hand; last, of her murdered lord
Their warrant cries against her; and from these
No man may think to quit her nor secure,
Save he that here comes timeliest for such toil
As none beside may take upon his hand.

Enter MURRAY.

Welcome, my lord, and to a land that lacks
As never yet it lacked or looked for you.
What comfort bring you for her wounds from France
Besides that present help of hand and head
We heard returned an hour since?

Murray. Sir, thus much:
All of our faith in France will in our cause
Live or die fighting; gold, and men in arms,
Will flow thence on us in full stream and free
If Scotland set but open hand or breast
To greet them coming; they will buy our love
At what best price they may.

Throgmorton. But you, my lord,
That have loved England ever, and that know
The worth and unworth weighed of either friend,
French faith or English, will not surely buy
With heavy hate of England the light love
That France and fraud would sell you; nor for this
Cast off the fortune and the peace unborn
That may bind fast in one strong ring of sea
Two jewels become one jewel, one such land
As from the stout fort of a single heart
Fixed like a sea-rock might look forth and laugh
Upon the under wars of all the world,
And see not higher the heads of kingdoms risen
Than of small waves in summer? Will you pluck
This hope out of the hopeful hand of time
Ere he can gather, — this good fruit that grows
On the green present branch of time's gray tree
To feed the future where the hungry past
Could get but blood for bread, and with bare steel
Died starved and smitten?

Murray. Sir, when I came in
By secret flight from France, out of the guard
Wherein I lived inwalled with watch of men
That the court set about me to withhold
My foot from England; when an English boat
Had borne me oversea by secret night
From privy port to port, — at the long last
I saw your queen's face darken on mine own
As on a servant favor-fallen, that came
To take rebuke, and speak not; in her speech
I found no note of favor, no good word
Nor honor such as late in France found,

And finding fled from: sharply with strange eyes
She glanced against me; taxed me with the bonds
Wherein men held my sister; half a threat
Was all her promise; I returned but this, —
I would be still a Scotsman, and this land
I had more mind to serve, and do her good,
Than either of these queens; so parted thence
Unfriendlike, yet with no breach openly
Proclaimed of friendship; and being here, my mind
Is yet to serve no mistress but alone
This earth my bones were bred of, this kind land
Which moulded me and fostered; her strong milk
Put manhood in my blood, and from my heart
If she that nurtured need it now to drink
I think not much to shed it. If those lords
In whom her power now stands shall with one mouth
Bid me put on this weight of regency,
For no man's fear shall I deny them: she,
Your queen, that threatens me with ignominy
If I obey their choice and call, must know
That to God only and my heart, those twain
That are one eye to know me and to judge,
Will I refer it; and of them being known
That with pure purpose and no soiled intent
I take this charge up, I will bear it through
To the right end. Yet, ere my mind be fixed,
I will behold her that was queen, and see
How sits the spirit within her; but howe'er,
Till Bothwell in our hands lie trapped and dead
She must not pass forth free; and we will hold
No traffic for the bear's skin merchant-like
Before the bear be caught; but if your queen
Proclaim against us therefore war, be sure
We will not lose our lives, yield up our lands,
And bear repute of rebels through the world,
Who might, how loath soe'er, in all men's eyes
Make our cause clear as righteousness: the proofs
Which in our hands lie darkling yet, but bear
The perfect witness of those ill deeds past
That bring her thus in danger of our doom
And righteous peril of all-judging law,
Must to the world's eye nakedly set forth
What cause is hers, and ours; when if I stand
In the king's likeness of the state elect,
To him in me shall all knees bend, and hearts
Kneel subjected; for them that hold apart,
No head shall stand of any Hamilton
That shall not bow before my sword or me.

SCENE IV. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN *and* GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Queen. Will he be here to-day? Alas, my friend!
I made my hope of this till he should come,
And now he comes I would not look on him.
I know not what put hope into my fear
That this your mother's and my father's son
Should do me good for evil.

George Douglas. Madam, I think
The mind can be but good that marshals him

To your fair presence; nay, though even his soul
Were damned so deep as to desire your death,
He durst not come to show us his purpose here
Who were not chosen for murderers at his hire,
But guards and servants that would shed their lives
Ere yours should look on danger.
Queen. That we know,
And have no better wage than love to give,
Which more to give we grudge not, being so poor,
Than from your queen's hands you disdain to take;
But what knows he? For aught our brother knows,
Your mother and yourself are envious guards
That hate me for my faith as for my fault,
And hold your hands but till he bids you slay,
Or yield me to my slayers. Ah! my last knight,
You shall do well to leave me at my need:
He will command you; when this brother knows
I am not hated, think you then my friend
Shall not be chidden from me?
George Douglas. When my life
Is bidden from my body: not till then
Shall I be found obedient.
Enter LADY LOCHLEVEN.
Queen. Be but wise,
And wisdom shall not let you disobey.
Our noble hostess, you have borne a son,
I dare not say more noble, but I dare
More simple, than his elders, — one whose heart
Stands fast when fortune stands not, and requires,
As other men do power and glory and gold,
No guerdon but the memory writ of him
To have been most true when fortune was most false,
And most to have loved whom she most hated: this
Shall not of them be written. Come you not
To bring one to me that shall never sin
As he by faith and folly? I would say
Of my great brother and your kingly son
Nothing but good; yet can nor you nor I
Say that he loves me and my fallen estate
More than the power he comes to take from me,
Or rather from their hands that ere he came
Had rent it out of mine. Nay, look not sad:
You should be merrier than my mother might,
Were she now living.
Lady Lochleven. God shall witness me
What joy I have of such a guest, or pride
To be so stricken, madam, of your tongue
Chastising me for triumph: if my heart
Exalt itself for this day's sake, God knows,
Who hears you mock me.
Queen. Nay, I said no scorn;
I had rather need to pray you in his name
Scorn not at me. Let him come in: I know
What ceremony my masters should put on
Were but to mock their servant.
Enter MURRAY, ATHOL, *and* MORTON.
Sirs, you twain
That brought me two months since between you safe
Out of the town by night that sought my blood
Myself bid welcome; but she is not I
That in this presence should make welcome here
My father's son; nor shall my speech usurp
For modesty that office: yet indeed

I am glad, my lord, to see your face, that must
Bring comfort, or an end of all this life
That yet needs comfort.
Murray. What I may, I will:
Yet haply shall you find not in my words
Or death or comfort; as you give them heed,
Shall they prove comfortable or deadly. — Sirs,
I have that to speak and hear that but requires
The Lady Mary's ear and mine: I pray you,
Take not offence that I crave leave to say
We must for some space lack your company.
Morton. My lord, the land that puts her trust in you
Bids us obey, well knowing that love nor fear
Shall bend you from her service.
Lady Lochleven. Sir —
Murray. Your will?
Lady Lochleven. I am no parcel of the sovereign state
That gives you of its greatness, nor have right
To speak commandingly; yet ere I go
I would desire you by what name I may,
Look on this lady with such equal eyes
As nor the wrath and hate of violent men,
Nor sense of evil done to this land's peace
By her mischance and evil counsellors,
Nor (what I would not fear to find in you)
Desire of rule with pride of station, may
Divert to do her wrong, or glance aside,
From the plain roadway of that righteousness
Whose name is also mercy. This at least
Surely by me may be of you required,
That in this house no wrong by word or act,
By deed or threat, may touch her.
Murray. Be assured
No wrong shall ever touch her by my hand,
And be content to know it.
Queen. Madam, these lords
Know that I thought ere this to find of you
A mediatress between me and your son:
I have my hope, and with a humble heart
I take your intercession thankfully.
[*Exeunt all but the* QUEEN *and* MURRAY.
Murray. I would I had another cause to speak,
Or you to listen, than this bitter theme
That brings us back together, though for that
I had died a foreign man.
Queen. I thought not, sir,
When we last parted ere the break of spring,
To meet you thus in summer; but these months
Have wrought things stranger on me.
Murray. Say, yourself
Have made of them more strange and perilous use
Than is the fruit they bear. I am not come
To flatter with you; that I seek your death
I think you fear not, yet should surely know
The man that seeks were now more like to speed
Than he that would preserve it. Heaven and earth
As with the tongue of one same law demand
Justice against you; nor can pity breathe
But low and fearful, till the right be weighed
That must in pity's spite and fear's be done,
Or this land never thrive. For that right's sake,
And not for hatred or rebellious heart,
Do men require that judgment pass on you,
And bring forth execution: the broad world

Expects amazedly when we that rule
Shall purge this land of blood, which now looks red
In the world's eye, and blushing not for shame
Blushes with bloodshed; in men's general mouths
The name of Scot is as a man's attaint
Of murderous treason, or as his more vile
That for base heart and fear, or hire of gold,
With folded hands watches the hands that slay
Grow great in murder; and God's heavy doom
Shall be removed not from us, nor his wrath,
Well may we fear, shall lighten, till the deed
That reeks as recent yet toward the fair heavens
Be thoroughly cleansed with judgment.
Queen. Must I too
Bleed to make Scotland clean of baser blood
Than this she seeks of mine?
Murray. If you shall die,
Bethink you for what cause, and that sole thought
Shall seal your lips up from all pride of plea
That would put in between your deed and doom
The name of queen to cover you. No age
That lived on earth red-handed without law
Ever let pass in peace and unchastised
Such acts as this that yet in all men's ears
Rings as a cry unanswered. When your lord
Lay newly murdered, and all tongues of friends
Were loud in prayer to you to save your name
From stain of accusation, and yield up
That head to judgment which the whole world held
Blood-guilty, first with subtle stretch of time
Did you put back the trial, then devise
To make it fruitless save of mockery;
next,
I cannot say for shame what shame foregone
Moved you to put upon this loathing land
That great dishonor to behold and bear
The man your lover for its lord, and you,
Queen of all Scots and thrall of one most base,
While yet the ring was from his finger warm
That sealed it first, and on his wedded hand
The young blood of your husband, ere the print
Had cooled of marriage or of murder,—you
In the hot circle of his amorous arms
A new-espoused adulteress. Will you say
You were enforced or by false counsels bent
To take him to your bosom? In what eye
Was not the foregone commerce of your loves
As bare as shame? what ear had heard not blown
His name that was your sword and paramour,
Whose hand in yours was now as steel to slay,
Now as a jewel for love to wear, a pledge
Hot from your lips and from your husband's heart?
Who knew not what should make this man so proud
That none durst speak against him of your friends
But must abide for answer unaware
The peril of the swords that followed him?
Went he not with you where you went and bade
Men come and go, do this or do not stand
Or pass as pleased him, ere that day had risen
Which gave the mockery of a ravished bride

To the false violence of his fraudful rape
That hardly she could feign to fear, or hide
The sweetness of the hour when she might yield
That which was his before, and in men's eyes
Make proof of her subjection? Nay, forbear;
Plead not for shame that force was put on you
To bear that burden and embrace that shame
For which your heart was hungry: foe nor friend
Could choose but see it, and that the food desired
Must be but mortal to you. Think on this,—
How you came hither crowned these six years gone,
In this same summer month, and with what friends
Girt round about, and guarded with what hopes,
And to a land how loving; and these years,
These few brief years, have blown from off your boughs
All blossom of that summer, though nor storm
Nor fire from heaven hath wrecked nor wind laid low
That stately tree that shadowed a glad land,
But now being inly gnawn of worms to death,
And made a lurking-place for poisonous things
To breed and fester at its rotten root,
The axe is come against it. None save you
Could have done this, to turn all hearts and hands,
That were for love's sake laid before your feet,
To fire and iron whetted and made hot
To war against you. No man lives that knows
What is your cause, and loathes not; though for craft
Or hope of vantage some that know will seem
To know not, and some eyes be rather blind
Than see what eyeless ignorance in its sleep,
If but it would, must needs take note of: none
Whose mind is maimed not by his own mere will,
And made perforce of its own deed perverse,
Can read this truth awry. What have you done?
Men might weep for you, yea, beholding it,
The eyes of angels melt: no tide of tears
Could wash from hand or soul the sinful sign
That now stands leprous there; albeit God knows
Myself for very pity could be glad
By mine own loss to ransom you, and set
Upon your soul again the seal of peace,
And in your hand its empire; but your act
Has plucked out of men's hearts that fain would keep
The privilege of mercy. God alone
Can lose not that forever, but retains
For all sins done that cry for judgment here
The property of pity, which in man
Were mere compliance and confederacy
With the sin pardoned. So shall you do best,
Being thus advised, to entertain the hope
Of nothing but God's mercy, and henceforth
Seek that as chiefest refuge; for in man
There shall no trust deliver you, nor free
Body nor soul from bonds. Weep not for that;
But let your tears be rather as were hers
That wept upon the feet of God, and bought
With that poor price her pardon.

Queen. So should I,
If grief more great may buy it than any of theirs
That had sinned more than I; nay, such have been,
And have been pardoned. I have done ill, and given
My name for shame to feed on, put mine honor
Into mine enemies' keeping, made my fame
A prey and pasture for the teeth of scorn.
I dare not say I wist not by what mean
I should be freed of one that marred my life,
Who could by no mean else be quit of him
Save this blind way of blood: yet men there were
More wise than I, men much less wronged of him,
That led me to it, and left me; but indeed
I cite not them to extenuate by strange aid
Mine own rash mind and unadvisedness,
That brought forth fruit of death; yet must you know
What counsels led me by the hand, and whence
My wrath was fostered; and how all alone,
How utterly uncomforted, and girt
With how great peril, when the man was slain,
I stood, and found not you to counsel me,
And no man else that loved; and in such need,
If I did ill to seek to that strong hand
Which had for me done evil, — if evil it were
To avenge me of mine enemy, — what did they
That by their hands and voices on his side
Put force on me to wed him? Yet I say not,
I was indeed enforced: I will not mock
With one false plea my penitent heart, nor strive
With words to darken counsel, nor incense
By foolishness your wisdom, to provoke
A judgment heavier than I wait for; nay,
You have not said that bitter thing of me
That I may dare unsay; what most I would,
I must deny not: yet I pray you think,
Even as might God, being just, what cause I had,
What plea to lighten my sore load of sin, —
Mismated and miscounselled, and had seen
Of my sad life not wholly nineteen years
When I came hither crowned; as yet would God
Your head, my brother, had endured for mine
That heaviness of honor, and this hand
The weight of Scotland, that being laid in mine
Has fallen and left it maimed, and on my brows
A mark as his whose temples for his crime
Were ringed with molten iron! Take them now,
Though but for pity of me that pray you take,
And bear them better than I did; for me,
Though no plea serve me in the sight of man,
Nor grace excuse my fault, I am yet content,
If I may live but so much time in bonds
As may suffice for God to pardon me,
Who shall not long put off to pardon, then
Shut eyes and sleep to death.

Murray. I had thought to-night
To speak no more with you, but let that hope
Which only in God's name I gave you bear
What fruit it might with prayer and watching; yet

Take comfort, and assure yourself of life,
And, if it may be, honor; one of these
I may take on me to redeem, and one
So as I may will I preserve from death
Dealt of men's tongues that murder it. But you,
Keep these things in your heart: that if you raise
Within this realm a faction, or devise
To break these bonds, I shall not keep an hour
This power I have to save you; nor shall keep
If France or England be by word of yours
Stirred up to strike at our frail peace; nor yet
If you shall cleave to him that should for shame
As from this land be cast out from your heart:
But if toward God your faults be faithfully
In good men's sight acknowledged, and that life
You led with your false lord, and all sins past,
Loathed and lamented, and in days to be
The living purpose in you manifest
Of a more modest habit, and a life
More nobly fashioned; if the slaughter done
On your dead husband seem of you abhorred,
And those ill days misliked wherein your fame
Drank mortal poison from his murderer's hand, —
If this be seen, and that your mind lives clear
From counsel of revenge upon those lords
Who sought your reformation, nor with hope
Nor dangerous forethought of device to be
Renews itself to do them some day wrong, —
Then may you now sit safe, and unreproved
Expect an end of bondage; for at large
You cannot think to live yet, who in time
May haply by repentance be restored,
And, for your prison somewhile here endured,
Find yet your throne again, and sit renewed
More royal than men wist who saw the ship
Put in from France that bore you.

Queen. O my friend,
O brother, found now father to me too,
Who have raised and rebegotten me from death,
By how much less I thank you for my life,
Think so much more for honor I give thanks
That you raise up the hope in me to have
Which was nigh dead for shame. Oh! let me hold
[*Embracing him.*
My comfort in mine arms, and with dumb lips
Kiss you my thanks: I looked for less than this,
But yet for comfort of you. One thing more,
Having so much, will I require, and cease, —
Even for my son's sake and mine own to lay
The charge upon you of this regency
Which none might bear so noble, nor bring back
Her peace again to Scotland, as I know
Your hand shall bring; and, had I known betimes,
I had not started from its curb aside,
Nor set against its strength, in no good hour,
The feebleness of mine. But if your heart
Be large enough to let forgiveness in
Of my wrongs done, and days of wanton will,
Take this charge too, — to keep for me the forts
Of all that was my kingdom: I would have
Nothing of mine lie now not in your hand.

Keep too my jewels; all I had of worth,
What help without you should I have of it,
What profit or what surety? Let your heart
Cast her not out who prays you of your grace,
Take these in trust and me.
Murray. I may not these;
But you, that put yourself into my trust,
I will not fail.
Queen. Nay, you shall keep them too.
Murray. I would not put my hand forth uncompelled
To take for life and death the burden up
That burns as fire, and bows the back that bears
As with an iron load; and certainly
He that shall take this kingdom on his hand,
I think, shall live not long: nor pride nor hope,
But very love and strong necessity,
Could only bow me down to obey their will
Who should enforce on mine the task to bear
This grievous office, that if Scotland bid
I for her sake must bear till I may die.
But if I be not bidden, for no love
Or fear, or lust of kingdom, will I seek
The labor and the grief of that great charge
That I may live and feel not.
Queen. By my lips,
That have no royal right to speak for her
Now, think that yet she bids you, seeing none else
To undo mine evil done on her, and heal
The wounds mine enemies and myself have made
In her sweet peace; she hath no stay but you:
Whom other should she seek to? And for me
Again I dare not urge you, but my heart
Is turned into a prayer that pleads with yours
To lend its weakness comfort of your strength
By taking off its fears; these that break mine
Can bow not yours: oh! take from me that weight
Which were to you but sport and ornament, —
The natural honor of a hand so strong
And spirit elect of all men's souls alive
To do a work imperial.
Murray. If not else
But by me only may this land find peace,
By me, then, shall it. For your private charge,
Impute not to me for default of love
That I beseech you lay no more on me
Than public need enforces: in my trust
Your treasures were no safer than they stand
Now that I keep them not, and no man's tongue
Can tax me with them as detained from you
By fraud or usurpation; which mine ear
Were loth to know was muttered.
Queen. But you see
Nor they nor I have surety save in you:
Let it be seen of them that else may doubt,
How thankfully I trust you; even for that
Do thus, to do me good in men's report
When they shall see us at one: from mine own hand,
Except you take them, shall they not be rent
By craft or force of hidden or harrying hands
That could not wrest from yours what mine must yield
For fault of you to help me?
Murray. As you will.
I would not cross you where I might content:
Yet willingly I cannot take on me
More charge than needs of privy trusts to keep
That bring men's blame about them; but in this
My will shall be your servant.

Re-enter LADY LOCHLEVEN *and* GEORGE DOUGLAS.

For this time
ake farewell: be patient, and seek peace
hence God may send it. — To your gentler hand,
hile yet the Lady Mary lives in ward, hooves not me commend her, being but bound
reverently as may beseem your son
the state's name to charge you that she find
all men's hands that guard her now about
od usage with safe keeping; which to assure
all hardly need this young man's service here,
r whom the state has other use, and I
worthier work than still to keep such watch
porters use or pages.

Lady Lochleven. He and I
nd at your bidding; yet were nowise loth
e state that gave should take this charge away
laid upon us.

Queen. Sir, the grace you brought
d comfort, to me sorrowing and afraid,
ever with you; and farewell.

Murray. Farewell.

Exeunt LADY LOCHLEVEN *and* MURRAY.

Queen. Will you not go?

George Douglas. Whither you bid, and when, I will go swiftly.

Queen. With your lord and mine,
would have said: yet irks it me to say
lord, who had none under heaven, and was
these my lords once lady. Said I not
u should do well to cast off care of me,
nom you must leave indeed now at command
re powerful of more potent lips than mine?
I would not have you set your younger will
Against his word imperial; nor, I think,
Doth he fear that, who bids us come and go,
And whose great pleasure is that you part hence,
And I sit here. Be patient, and seek peace,
You heard him bid me: patience we must have
If we would rest obedient; and for peace,
So haply shall we find it, having learnt
What rest is in submission.

George Douglas. Bid me stay,
And that my will shall part not hence alive
What need I swear?

Queen. Alas! your will may stay,
Your will may wait on me to do me good,
Your loves and wishes serve me, when yourself
Shall live far off. Our lord forbids them not:
It is the service of your present hand,
The comfort of your face, help of your heart,
That he forbids me.

George Douglas. And, though God forbade,
Save by my death he should compel me not
To do this bidding: only by your mouth,
Of all that rule in heaven and earth, will I
Be willingly commanded.

Queen. You must go.
Nay, I knew that: how should one stay by me?
There was not left me, by God's wrath or man's,
One friend when I came hither, in the world.
And from the waste and wilderness of grief
If one grain ripen, — from the stone and sand
If one seed blossom, — if my misery find

One spring on earth to assuage its fiery lip, —
How should I hope that God or man will spare
To trample or to quench it?
George Douglas. I am here
While you shall bid me live, and only hence
When you shall bid me but depart and die.
Queen. There was a time when I would dream that men
There were to do my bidding, — such as loved
And were beloved again, and knew not fear
Nor hope but of love's giving; but meseemed
That in my dream all these were cast away,
And by God's judgment, or through wrath of men,
Or mine own fault, or change and chance of time,
I lived too long to look for love in vain.
Many there are that hate me now of men:
Doth one live yet that loves?
George Douglas. If one there were
That for your love's sake should abhor his life,
Hating all hope save this, to die for you, —
What should he do to die so?
Queen. If I bade
That for my love's sake he should love his life,
And use its strength to cherish me, who knows
If he would heed? or say I gave command
To do some ill thing or of ill report, —
Were it to slay our brother now gone hence, —
Would one do that? I would not have it done,
Though I should bid him. Do not answer me
As though I questioned with you seriously,
Or spake of things that might be thought upon,
Who do but jest with grief as with my friend,
That plays again familiarly with me,
And from the wanderings of a joyless wit
Turn to clasp hands with sorrow. You must go.
George Douglas. Ay, when you bid; but were my going from you
Part of your grief, which is more grief to me
Than my soul's going from forth my body were,
I would not set my face from hence alive.
Queen. I hold it not for no part of my grief
To bid you from me: yet being here bound in
As I with walls and waters, we should find
Less help than yet I hope for of your hand
Being hence enlarged. We will take counsel, sir,
And choose, with no large choice to make of friends, —
To whom we shall appoint you, — by what mean
To deal for our deliverance: as, with one
Once of my household, and this lady's kin,
Who here of all my Maries the last left
Partakes my bonds; the Laird of Ricarton,
My husband's kinsman; and what readiest friends
Once more may be raised up, as when I fled
From shame and peril, and a prison-house
As hateful as these bonds, to find on earth —
Ah! no such love and faith as yours in man.

SCENE V. — HOLYROOD.

MURRAY *and* MORTON.

Murray. I am vexed with divers counsels, and my will

Sees nor its way nor end. This act proclaimed
That seals the charge of murder on the queen
To justify our dealing had to it hands
That here first met: Kirkaldy with Glencairn,
Balfour with Maitland, Huntley with Argyle,
True man with traitor,—all were as one mind,
One tongue to tax her with complicity,
Found art and part with them that slew her lord.
Men praised the council for this judgment given
As from a single and a resolute soul;
Scarce one withstood save Herries, and his voice
Was as a wind that sings in travellers' ears
Unheeded; then the doom that gives to death
All that in act maintain the former faith,
And writes for Catholic traitor, should have purged
The state of treacherous or of dangerous friends
Such as made protest then against this law,
And fled from our part to the Hamiltons,—
Caithness and Athol, with the bishop called
Of Murray, whom the Assembly met to judge
By one same doom has with Argyle condemned
To stand in sackcloth for adulteries past
At Stirling through the time of service held
Within the chapel royal. Such men's stay
It irks not me to lose, who by their loss
Were fain to win their enemies for my friends
More fast and faithful; but men's sundering minds
Nor council nor assembly can reknit,
Though Knox there sit by Maitland, and Balfour
Touch sides with Craig; and while the state as now
Lives many-minded and distraught of will,
How shall its hope be stable?

Morton. Some there are
Have all their will, or more than we that rule
By secular wit and might: the preachers reign
With heavier hand than ours upon the state,
Who in this late assembly by their doom
Bade your fair sister of Argyle partake
The sackcloth penance of her slippery lord
For scandal to the Kirk done when last year
At the font's edge her arms sustained our prince
For baptism of such hands as served the mass:
If it have leave long to sit lawgiver,
Their purity will pinch us.

Murray. Have no fear:
It shall not Douglas; and we lack their help
Who sway the commons only with their breath,
Now most of all when our high counsels fail,
And hopes are turned as 'twere to running streams
That flow from ours to feed our enemies' hands
With washings of our wreck, waifs of our strength,
That melts as water from us. Those chief twain
Whose league I sought by marriage, and had hope
To bind them to us as brethren, when Argyle
With me should knit himself anew, to wed
His brother to the sister of my wife
With happier hope than he espoused mine own,
While Huntley's son should lead my daughter home,
And with this fourfold knot our loves be tied,

And fortunes with each other's growth ingraffed, —
Both these look back now toward the Hamiltons
To mingle factions with them, being assured
Our hands now lack the secret sword we had
To draw at need against them, since their names
Set at Craigmillar to the bond of blood
Are with that bond consumed, and no tongue left
To wag in witness of their part of guilt,
Now Bothwell's knaves are hanged that laid the train,
And Hay with them, and one most near his trust, —
His kinsman Hepburn, from whose mouth condemned,
And Ormiston's, we have confession wrung
That marks with blood as parcel of their deed
More than Balfour that in the assembly sit,
And must partake his surety. This, my lord,
Craves of us care and counsel, that our names
Be writ not fool or coward, who took in hand
Such trust to work such treason.
Morton. Nay, no Scot
Shall say we fell from faith or treacherously
Let men's hopes fade that trusted us, and sank
Through feebleness of ours: yet have we strength
To lower the height of heart and confidence
That makes their faction swell, who were but late
Too faint of spirit, too fearful and unsure,
To be made firm with English subsidies.
Three thousand marks, that Scrope by secret hand
Sent from Carlisle to Herries, could not serve
To give or shape or sinew to their plots
Who are now so great their houses heir must wed
No lowlier than a queen, and Bothwell's wife,
For this divorced or widowed.
Murray. Ay; we know
The archbishop his good uncle wit this youth
Hath in Dumbarton fortified himself;
And while they there sit strong an high in hope
Our prisoner and our penitent late, w hear,
Grows blithe of mood and wanton from her sight
Have I dismissed my mother's younges born,
Lest in her flatteries his weak faith b snared
And strangled with a smile; and fo her hand
I have found a fitter suitor tha Arbroath
When she shall wed again, withi whose veins
Some drops of blood run royal as he own;
Methuen, whose grandsire was th third that set
His ring on that Queen Margaret wedded hand
From the seventh Henry sent ambass dress
To our fourth James, to bring fo bridal gift
Her father's love and England's to he lord,
And with the kiss of marriage on h lips
To seal that peace which with her hu band's life
Found end at Flodden from he brother's hand
That split the heart of Scotland. S the queen,
If she wed Methuen, shall espouse man
Whose father of the same queen womb was born
That bore her father; and whose bloo as hers
Is lineal from the seed of Englis kings,

Through one same mother's sons, queen once of Scots,
And daughter born and sister, though unqueened,
Of those twain Henries that made peace and war
With Scotland and her lord; and by this match
The Hamiltons being frustrate of their hope
Could yet not tax us with a meaner choice
Than they would make for her, who while she lives
Must stand thenceforth far off from their designs
And disallied from all that in her name
Draw now to head against us; and some help
We need the more to cross them now, that France,
To whom I thought to seek as to my friend
And thence find aid in this necessity
That else finds none, since England's jealous craft
Puts in our enemies' hands gold for a sword
More sharp than steel — France, that would send at need
The choice of all her sons that hold our faith
To live and die beside us here in arms,
Grows chillier toward us than the changing wind
That brings back winter; for the brood of Guise,
Our prisoner's friends and kinsmen of Lorraine,
Prevail again on Catherine's adverse part,
Whose hate awhile gives way to them, and yields
Our cause into their hands that were more like
To help this daughter of their dangerous house
Take up the crown resigned, and through their strength
Renew this kingdom's ruin with her reign,
Than send us aid and arms to guard its peace
From inroad as from treason: which I doubt
We shall hear news of from my brother's tongue,

Enter SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.

Who comes without a herald.

Sir W. Douglas. Sir, the news
Is dashed with good and evil equally,
That here I bring you; for the treasons laid
Have missed their mark, and left unwounded yet
My house's honor, that retains in trust
So great a charge. You had word ere this of me,
By what strange fortune was their plot made known,
Who thought to fall upon us unaware,
And find a ferry for some seventy swords
To cross the lake in mine own barge surprised,
And smite those thirty guards that hold the walls,
And make a murderous passage for the queen
To come forth free with feet that walked in blood;
And how by one, a Frenchman of her train,
Who, being not in their counsel, heard some speech
Of such a preparation, and conceived
This was a plot to take her from your hand,
Laid by the fiercer faction of the Kirk
That sought to snare and slay her in your despite,
To me was all discovered; and betimes
I gave command no barge thenceforth should pass
Between the main shore and mine island walls,
But a skiff only that with single oars
Might be rowed over. Baffled thus, here friends
Were fain to buy the boatman's faith with gold,
Whom on suspicion I dismissed, but since,
Finding less trust and service in the knave

That had his place, called back, and bade take heed
Of these that would have won to their device
A foundling page within my castle bred,
And called by mine own name; who by this plot
Should have seduced for them my sentinels,
And oped the gate by night: but yet I find,
For all toils set and gins to take their faith,
In him and them no treason; yet so near
Was treason to us, that not long since the queen
Had well-nigh slipped beyond our guard by day,
In habit of a laundress that was hired
So to shift raiment with her; but being forth
Betimes, as was this woman's use to come,
In the low light by dawn, at such an hour
As she was wont to sleep the morning out, —
The fardel in her hand of clothes brought forth,
And on her face the muffler, — it befell
That as she sat before the rowers, and saw
Some half her free brief way of water past,
By turn of head or lightning of her look
For mirth she could not hide, and joyous heart,
Or but by some sweet note of majesty,
Some new bright bearing and imperious change
From her false likeness, so she drew their eyes
That one who rowed, saying merrily, *Let us see*
What manner of dame is this, would fain pluck down
Her muffler, who to guard it suddenly
Put up her fair white hands, which seeing they knew,
And marvelled at her purpose; she thereat,
A little wroth but more in laughter bared
Her head, and bade stretch oars and take the land
On their lives' peril; which regarding not,
They straight put back as men amazed but swore
To keep fast locked from mine of all men's eyes
The secret knowledge of this frustrate craft,
So set her down on the island side again
With muffled head and hidden hand to wring
And weep apart for passion, where my watch
Looks now more strict upon her; but think, —
For all her wrath and grief to be by chance
From her near hope cast down and height of mind
Wherein she went forth laughingly to find
What good might God bring of her perilous hour, —
She hath lost not yet nor changed that heart nor hope,
But looks one day to mock us.
Murray. So I think;
And in that fear would have you keep fast watch
By night and day till we take off the charge
Laid on your faith, and or enfranchise her
Or change her place of ward; which ere the spring
That holds in chase this winter's flying foot
Be turned to summer, haply shall be done.
What fashion holds our mother with the queen?
Sir W. Douglas. As she was ever tender of her state,
And mild in her own office, so she keeps
Observance yet and reverence more than meet
Save toward a queen, toward this her guest enforced,

Who smiles her back a prisoner's thanks, and sighs
That should smile in prison; but 'twixt whiles
Some change of mood will turn to scorn or spleen
Her practised patience, and some word take wing
Forth from her heart's root through her lips that hath
The gall of asps within it; yet not this
Turns the heart hard or bitter that awaits
Her gentler change, pitying the wrong it bears,
And her that wrongs it for the sorrow's sake
That chafes and rends her.
Murray. Pity may she give,
And be praised for it; but to entertain
Hope or desire that wars against her trust
Should turn that praise to poison. Have you seen
Since George went thence, or noted ere he went,
In her no token of a mingled mind
That sways 'twixt faith and such a faithless hope
As feeds a mother's love with deadly dreams
Of prophesying ambition? for in him
I spied the sickness of a tainted heart
And fever-fired from the most mortal eyes
That ever love drank death of.
Sir W. Douglas. No, my lord.
Murray. I would fain trust her mind were whole in this,
And her thoughts firm; yet would not trust too far,
Who know what force of fraud and fire of will
In that fierce heart and subtle, without fear,
That God hath given so sweet a hiding-place,
Make how much more the peril and the power
Of birth and kinglier beauty, that lay wait
For her son's sake to tempt her. We will hold
More speech of this: here shall you rest to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.

The QUEEN *and* MARY BEATON.

Queen. Is it not sunset? what should ail the day
To hang so long in heaven? the world was blind
By this time yesternight. The lake gleams yet.
Will the sun never sink, for all the weight
That makes this hour so heavy?
Mary Beaton. While you speak,
The outer gate that stands till nightfall wide
Shuts on the sundown; and they bring the keys
That soon the page shall put into our hand
To let in freedom.
Queen. I could weep and laugh
For fear and hope and angry joy and doubt
That wring my heart. I am sick at once and well.
Shall I win past them in this handmaid's dress
If we be spied? My hood is over broad;
Help me to set it forward: and your own
Sits loose; but pluck it closer on your face
For cloak and cover from the keen moon's eye
That peers against us. Twice, thou knowest, yea thrice,
God has betrayed me to mine enemies' hands
Even when my foot was forth: if it slip now,
He loves nor kings that hold his office here
Nor his own servants, but those faithless mouths
That mock all sovereignties in earth or heaven.
If here he fail me, and I fall again

To sit in bonds a year — by God's own truth,
I swear I will not keep this wall of flesh
To cage my spirit within these walls of stone,
But break this down to set that free from these,
That, being delivered of men's wrongs and his,
It may stand up, and gazing in his eyes
Accuse him of my traitors.
Mary Beaton. Keep good heart.
Your hope before was feverish and too light,
And so it failed you: in this after-plot
There is more form and likeness than in those
That left you weeping. Let not passion now
Foil your good fortune twice, or heat of mood
From keen occasion take the present edge,
And blunt the point of fortune.
Queen. If I knew
This man were faithful — oh, my heart that was
Is melted from me, and the heart I have
Is like wax melting. Were my feet once free,
It should be strong again: here it sinks down
As a dead fire in ashes. Dare we think
I shall find faith in him, who have not found
In all the world? no man of mine there is,
None of my land or blood, but hath betrayed,
Betrayed or left me.
Mary Beaton. Nay, too strange it were
That you should come to want men's faith, and look
For love of man in vain. These were your jewels,
You cannot live to lack them: nay, but less, —
Your common ornaments to wear and leave,
Your change of raiment to cast off, and bind
A fresher robe about you: while men live,
And you live also, these must give you love,
And you must use it.
Queen. So one told me once, —
That I must use and lose it. If my time
Be come to need man's love, and find it not,
I have known death make a prophet of a man
That living could foretell but his own end,
Not save himself, being foolish; and I too,
I am mad as he was, now to think on him
Or my dead follies. Were these walls away,
I should no more; ay, when this strait is past,
I shall win back my wits and my blithe heart,
And make good cheer again.

Enter PAGE.

Page. Here are the keys.
I had wrought instead a ladder for our need,
With two strong oars made fast across, for fear
I had failed at last from under my lord's eye
To sweep them off the board-head: here they ring,
As joy-bells here to give your highness note
The skiff lies moored on the island's lee, and waits
But till the castle boats by secret hands
Be stripped of oars and rowlocks, and pursuit
Made helpless, maimed of all its means; the crew
Is ready that shall lend us swifter wing
Than one man's strength to fly with; and beyond
Your highness' friends upon the further bank
Wait with my master's horses. Never was
A fairer plot or likelier.

Queen. How thy face
Lightens! Poor child, what knowest thou of the chance
That cast thee on my fortunes? it may be
To death ere life break bud, and thy poor flower
The wind of my life's tempest shall cut off,
And blow thy green branch bare. Many there be
Have died, and many that now live shall die,
Ere my life end, for my life's sake; and none
There is that knows, of all that love or hate,
What end shall come of this night's work, and what
Of all my life-days. I shall die in bonds,
Perchance, a bitter death; yet worse it were
To outlive dead years in prison, and to loathe
The life I could not lose. This will not be:
To days and nights shall I see wax and wane,
Kindled and quenched in bondage, any more:
For if to-night I stand not free on earth
As the sun stands in heaven, whose sovereign eye
Next day shall see me sovereign, I shall live
Not one day more of darkling life, as fire
Pent in a grate, bound in with blackening bars,
But like a star by God hurled forth of heaven
Fall, and men's eyes be darkened, and the world
Stand heart-struck, and the night and day be changed
That see me falling. If I win not forth,
But, flying, be taken of the hands that were
Before laid on me, they shall never think
To hold me more in fetters, but take heart
To do what earth saw never yet, and lay
By doom and sentence on their sovereign born
Death; I shall find swift judgment, and short shrift
My justicers shall give me: so at least
Shall I be quit of bondage. Come, my friends,
That must divide with me for death or life
This one night's issue; be it or worst or best,
Yet have ye no worse fortune than a queen,
Or she than ye no better. On this hour
Hang all those hours that yet we have to live:
Let us go forth to pluck the fruit of this
That leans now toward our hand. My heart is light:
Be yours not heavier; for your eyes and mine
Shall look upon these walls and waves no more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. — THE SHORE OF LOCH LEVEN.

GEORGE DOUGLAS, BEATON, RICARTON, *with Attendants.*

George Douglas. I hear the beat of the oars: they make no haste.
How the stars thicken! if a mist would take
The heaven but for an hour, and hide them round —

Ricarton. How should they steer then straight? We lacked but light.
And these are happy stars that sign this hour
With earnest of good fortune; and betimes
See by their favor where the prize we seek
Is come to port.

Enter the QUEEN, MARY BEATON, *Page, and a girl attending.*

Queen. Even such a night it was
I looked again for to deliver me,
Remembering such a night that broke my bonds

Two wild years past that brought me through to this;
The wind is loud beneath the mounting moon,
And the stars merry. Noble friends, to horse;
When I shall feel my steed exult with me,
I will give thanks for each of your good deeds
To each man's several love. I know not yet
That I stand here enfranchised; for pure joy
I have not laid it yet to heart: methinks
This is a lightning in my dreams tonight,
That strikes and is not, and my flattered eyes
Must wake with dawn in bonds. — Douglas, I pray,
If it be not but as a flash in sleep,
And no true light now breaking, tell me you,
That were my prison's friend: I will believe
I am free as fire, free as the wind, the night,
All glad fleet things of the airier element
That take no hold on earth; for even like these
Seems now the fire in me that was my heart,
And is a song, a flame, a burning cloud
That moves before the sun at dawn, and fades
With fierce delight to drink his breath and die.
If ever hearts were stabbed with joy to death,
This that cleaves mine should do it, and one sharp stroke
Pierce through the thrilled and trembling core like steel,
And cut the roots of life. Nay, I am crazed,
To stand and babble like one mad with wine,
Stung to the heart and bitten to the brain
With this great drink of freedom; oh such wine
As fills man full of heaven, and in his veins
Becomes the blood of gods. I would fain feel
That I were free a little, ere that sense
Be put to use: those walls are fallen for me,
Those waters dry, those gaolers dead and this
The first night of my second reign, that here
Begins its record. I will talk no more
Nor waste my heart in joyous words nor laugh
To set my free face toward the large eyed sky,
Against the clear wind and the climbing moon,
And take into mine eyes and to my breast
The whole sweet night and all the stars of heaven,
But put to present work the heart and hand
That here rise up a queen's. Bring me to horse:
We will take counsel first of speed and then
Take time for counsel.

Beaton. Madam, here at hand
The horses wait: Lord Seyton rides with us
Hence to Queen's Ferry, where beyond the Forth
We reach Claude Hamilton, who with fresh steeds
Expects us; to Long Niddry thence and there
Draw rein among the Seytons, ere again
We make for Hamilton, whose walls should see
The sun and us together.

Queen. Well devised.
Where is the girl that fled with us, and gave
These garments for my surety? She shall have
Her part in my good hour, that in mine ill
Did me good service.

Ricarton. Madam, she must stay:
e have not steeds enough, and those
we have
ay bear no load more than perforce
they must,
we not hope to speed.
Queen. Nay, she shall go,
ot bide in peril of mine enemies
here
hile we fly scathless hence.
Girl. Most gracious queen,
me take no such care: I am well
content
ey should do with me all they would,
and I
ve but so long to know my queen as
safe
I for her die gladly.
Ricarton. She says well:
t we to horse. I must ride south to
rouse
kinsfolk, and with all our Hepburn
bands
ize on Dunbar; whence northward I
may bear
od tidings to your lord.
Queen. God make them good
at he shall hear of me, and from his
mouth
nd me good words and comfort! You
shall ride
raight from Lord Seyton's with my
message borne
all good soldiers of your clan and
mine,
d wake them for our common lord's
dear love
strike once more, or never while
they live
called but slaves and kinless: then
to him
r whom the bonds that I put off to-
night
ere borne and broken. — Douglas, of
that name
st tender and most true to her that
was
women most unfriended, and of
queens
st abject and unlike to recom
pense,
ke in your hand the hand that it set
free,
And lead me as you led me forth of
bonds
To my more perfect freedom. — Sirs, to
horse. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. — HAMILTON CASTLE.

The QUEEN, ARGYLE, *and* HUNTLEY.

Queen. I ever thought to find your
faiths again
When time had set me free; nor shall
my love
To my good friends be more unprofit-
able
Than was my brother's, from whose
promised hand
Both have withdrawn the alliance of
your own
To plight once more with mine: your
son, my lord,
And, noble sir, your brother, will not
fail
Of worthier wedlock and of trustier
ties
Than should have bound them to a
traitor's blood,
His daughter, and the sister of his wife,
Whom he so thought to honor, and in
them
Advance his counsels and confirm his
cause,
Through your great names allied, who
now take part
More worthily with one long over-
thrown,
And late re-risen with many a true man's
more
And royally girt round with many a
friend's;
Nor need we lay upon our kinsmen
here
All our hope's burden, nor submit our
hand
To marriage with our cousin's of
Arbroath
For fault of other stay. For mine own
mind,
I would stand rather on Dumbarton
rock
Walled in with Fleming's spears, than
here sit fast
With these six thousand ranged about
the walls

That five days' suns have brought to strengthen me
Since I fled hither in these poor same weeds
That yet for need I wear. Now, by the joy
I had that night to feel my horse beneath
Bound like my heart that through those darkling ways
Shot sunwards to the throne, I do not think
Thus to sit long at wait, who have the hands
Subscribed here of so many loyal lords
To take no thought but of their faith to me,
Nor let dissension touch their hearts again
Till I sit crowned as arbitress of all
When the great cause is gained. Each bloodless day
Makes our foes greater: from Dunbar Lord Hume,
Who thence with hand too swift cut off our friends,
Brings now six hundred to my brother's flag,
Who hangs hard by us; and from Edinburgh
Grange leads his hundreds; all the Glasgow folk,
For love of Lennox, with the Lothian carles,
Draw round their regent hither; and God knows
These are no cowards nor men vile esteemed
That stand about him: better is he served
Of them than we of Herries, whose false wit
Works with an open face and a close heart
For other ends than live upon his tongue,
And fill with protestation those loud lips
That plead and swear on both sides; he would stand
My counsellor, yet has not craft enough
To draw those enemies hence that watch us here

By tumult raised along the border si
For none to quell but Murray, who w
bound
From Glasgow where he lies yet
Dumfries,
But halts to gather head, and fall on
When we set forth; which by my p
vate will
I would not yet, but that my kinsm
yearn
To bid him battle; and with victory w
Seize to themselves the kingdom by n
hand,
Which they should wield then at the
will, and wed
To their next heir's: so should ye ha
their seed
For kings of Scotland, who we
leagued ere this
With our main foes, and to their han
but late
By composition and confederacy
Would have given up my life to b
their ends
Even with the blood whose kinship
their veins
They thought should make them roy
Argyle. We must fear
These days that fleet, and bring us
more strength,
Bring to the regent comfort and go
hope
From England of a quiet hand ma
tained
Upon the borders, and such prese
peace
As fights against us there upon his sid
While he stands fast and gathers friend
who had
But common guard about him wh
your grace
Fled hither first, yet would not at t
news
For dread of our near neighborho
turn back
With that thin guard to Stirling; a
by this
The chiefs of all his part are drawn
him,
Morton and Mar, Semple with Och
tree,
And they that wrung forth of your roy
hand

e writing that subscribed it kingdom-
less:
l these are armed beneath him.
Queen. These are strong,
t are our friends not weaker: twain
alone,
ou twain with whom I speak, being
on my side,
would not fear to bide the feud of
these;
d here are Cassilis, Eglinton, Mont-
rose,
ss, Crawford, Errol, Fleming, Suther-
land,
rries with Maxwell, Boyd and Oli-
phant,
d Livingstone, and Beaumont that
was sent
speak for France as with mine
uncle's tongue
eading with those my traitors for that
life
hich here he finds enfranchised; and
all these
one true heart to me and faithful
hand,
God's name and their honor's
leagued as friends
ho till mine enemies be cast down
will know
ught save their duty to me, that no
strife
all rend in sunder, and no privy jar
ve one from other that stands fast by
me.
is have they sworn; and, by my trust
in them,
ill not doubt with favor or with force
quell the hardiest heart set opposite.
ve I not sent forth word of amnesty
every soul in Scotland free save
these,
e top and crown of traitors, Morton
first;
d Lindsay, from whose hand I took
a pledge
be redeemed with forfeit of his head;
mple, that writ lewd ballads of my
love,
d that good provost whom I swore
to give,
r one night's prison given me in his
house,
A surer gaol for narrower resting-place
Than that wherein I rested not; and
last
Balfour, that gave my lord's trust up
and mine?
Upon these five heads fallen will I set
foot
When I tread back the stair that
mounts my throne.
All others shall find grace: yea, though
their hearts
Were set more stark against me and
their hands
More dangerous aimed than these; for
this God knows
My heart more honours and shall ever
love
A hardy foe more than a coward friend;
And Hume and Grange, mine enemies
well approved,
Could love or recompense reknit their
faiths
To my forsworn allegiance, in mine
eyes
Should stand more clear than un-
revolted men
Whose trustless faith is farther from
my trust
Than from my veins the nearness of
their blood.
I am not bitter-hearted, nor take pride
To keep the record of wrongs done to
me
For privy hate to gnaw upon, and fret
Till all its wrath be wroken; I desire
Not blood so much of them that seek
mine own
As victory on them, who being but
subdued
For me may live or die my subjects:
this
I care not if I win with liberal words
Or weapons of my friends, for love or
fear,
Or by their own dissensions that may
spring
And blossom to my profit; and I hold
Nor fear nor grief grievous nor terri-
ble
That might buy victory to me, for
whose sake
Peril and pain seem pleasant, and all
else

That men thirst after as I thirst for this —
Wealth, honour, pleasure, all things weighed therewith —
Seem to my soul contemptible and vile.
Nor would I reign that I might take revenge,
But rather be revenged that I might reign.
For to live conquered and put on defeat,
To sit with humbled head and bear base life,
Endure the hours to mock me, and the days
To take and give me as a bondslave up
For night by night to tread on — while death lives,
And may be found, or man lay hold on him,
I will not have this to my life, but die.
I know not what is life that outlives hope,
But I will never: when my power were past,
My kingdom gone, my trust brought down, my will
Frustrate, I would not live one heartless hour
To think what death were gentlest; none so sharp
But should be softer to my bosom found
Than that which felt it strike.

Huntley. You speak as ever
Your own high soul and speech; no spirit on earth
Was ever seen more kinglike than lifts up
With yours our hearts to serve you for its sake
As these have served that here would speak with you.

Enter BEATON *and* MARY BEATON.

To whom our loves yield place.

[*Exeunt* ARGYLE *and* HUNTLEY.

Queen. My chance were ill
If to no better love your loves gave way
Than that which makes us friends. — You are come betimes,
If you come ready now to ride; here lie
The letters you must bear: the cardinal's this,
Mine uncle's of Lorraine, to whose kind hand
Did I commend the first news of my flight
Sent from Lord Seyton's while our horses breathed;
By this shall he receive my mind writ large,
And turn his own to help me. Look you say
Even as I write, you left me in such mind
As he would know me, — for all past faults done
Bent but to seek of God and of the world
Pardon; as knowing that none but only God
Has brought me out of bonds, and inly fixed
In perfect purpose for his mercy shown
To show a thankful and a constant heart,
As simple woman or as queen of Scots
In life and death fast cleaving to his Church,
As I would have him that shall read believe
My life to come shall only from his lips
Take shape and likeness, by their breath alone
Still swayed and steered; to whom you know I look
For reconciling words that may subdue
To natural pity of my laboring cause
The queen that was my mother, and her son
My brother king that in my husband's seat
Sits lineal in succession. Say too this
That without help I may not hold mine own;
And therefore shall he stand the more my friend,
And do the kindlier, the more haste he makes
With all good speed to raise and to despatch
A levy of a thousand harquebusmen
To fill the want up of my ranks, that yet
Look leaner than mine enemies'. This for France.

And this to the English queen delivering say,
I look, being free now, for that help of hers
That in my last years' bonds not once or twice
had by word of promise, and not doubt
This year to have indeed; which if I may,
When from her hand I take my crown again,
shall thenceforth look for no other friend,
And try no further faith. This private word
n London to the ambassador of Spain
Fail not to bear, that being set round with spies
may not write; but he shall tell his king
The charges that men cast on me are false,
And theirs the guilt that held me in their bonds
Who stand in spirit firm to one faith with him
From whom I look for counsel. I well think
My sister's love shall but desire to hold
A mean betwixt our parties, and pronounce
On each side judgment, as by right and might
Twixt mine and me the imperial mediatress,
Commanding peace, controlling war, that must
Determine this dark time, and make alone
An end of doubt and danger; which perchance
May come before her answer. Haste, and thrive.

[*Exit* BEATON.

Now, what say you? shall fortune stand our friend
ut long enough to seem worth hope or fear,
r fall too soon from us for hope to help
r fear to hurt more than an hour of chance
Might make and unmake? This were now my day
To try the soothsaying of men's second sight
Who read beyond the writing of the hour,
And utter things unborn: now would I know,
And yet I would not, how my life shall move
And toward what end forever; which to know
Should help me not to suffer, nor undo
One jot that must be done or borne of me,
Nor take one grain away. I would not know it;
For one thing haply might that knowledge do,
Or one thing undo, — to bring down the heart
Wherewith I now expect it. We shall know,
When we shall suffer, what God's hour will bring;
If filled with wrath full from his heavy hand,
Or gently laid upon us. I do think,
If he were wroth with aught once done of me,
That anger should be now fulfilled, and this
His hour of comfort; for he should not stand,
For his wrath's sake with me, mine enemies' friend,
Who are more than mine his enemies. Never yet
Did I desire to know of God or man
What was designed me of them; nor will now
For fear desire the knowledge. What I may,
That will I foil of all men's enmities,
And what I may of hope and good success
Take, and praise God. Yet thus much would I know,
If in your sight, who have seen my whole life run
One stream with yours since either had its spring,

My chance to come look foul or fair again
By this day's light and likelihood.
Mary Beaton. In sooth,
No soothsayer am I; yet so far a seer,
That I can see but this of you and me,
We shall not part alive.
Queen. Dost thou mean well?
Thou hast been constant ever at my hand
And closest when the worst part of my fate
Came closest to me; firm as faith or love
Hast thou stood by my peril and my pain,
And still, where I found these, there found I thee;
And where I found thee, these were not far off.
When I was proud and blithe (men said) of heart,
And life looked smooth and loving in mine eyes,
Thou wouldst be sad and cold as autumn winds,
Thy face discomfortable, and strange thy speech,
Thy service joyless; but when times grew hard,
And there was wind and fire in the clear heaven,
Then wast thou near; thy service and thy speech
Were glad and ready; in thine eyes thy soul
Seemed to sit fixed at watch as one that waits
And knows, and is content with what shall be.
Nor can I tell now if thy sight should put
More faith in me, or fear, to trust or doubt
The chance forefigured in thee; for thou art
As 'twere my fortune, faithful as man's fate,
Inevitable. I cannot read the roll
That I might deem were hidden in thy hand,
Writ with my days to be, nor from thine eyes
Take light to know; for fortune is too blind
As man that knows not of her; and thyself,
That art as 'twere a type to me and sign
Incognizable, art no more wise than I
To say what I should hope and fear to learn,
Or why, from thee.
Mary Beaton. This one thing I know well,
That hope nor fear need think to feed upon,
That I should part from you alive, or you
Take from me living mine assurance yet
To look upon you while you live, and trace
To the grave's edge your printed feet with mine.
Queen. Wilt thou die too?
Mary Beaton. Should I so far, so long,
Follow my queen's face, to forsake at last,
And lose my name for constancy? or you,
Whose eyes alive have slain so many men,
Want, when death shuts them, one to die of you
Dying, who had so many loving lives
To go before you living?
Queen. Thou dost laugh
Always, to speak of death; and at this time
God wot it should beseem us best to smile
If we must think upon him. I and thou
Have so much in us of a single heart,
That we can smile to hear of that or see
Which sickens and makes bleed faint hearts for fear.
And well now shall it stand us both in stead
To make ours hard against all chance, and walk
Between our friends and foes indifferently
As who may think to see them one day shift

From hate to love, and love again to hate,
As time with peaceable or warlike hand
Shall carve and shape them; and to go thus forth,
And make an end, shall neither at my need
Deject me nor uplift in spirit, who pass
Not gladly nor yet loathly to the field
That these my present friends have in my name
Set for the trial of my death or life.
Thou knowest long since God gave me cause to say
I saw the world was not that joyous thing
Which men would make it, nor the happiest they
That lived the longest in it: so I thought
That year the mightiest of my kinsmen fell,
Slain by strong treason; and these five years gone
Have lightened not so much my life to me,
That I should love it more, or more should loathe
That end which love or loathing, faith or fear,
Can put not back nor forward by a day.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. — LANGSIDE.

MURRAY, MORTON, HUME, LINDSAY, OCHILTREE, SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, KIRKALDY, *and their forces.*

Murray. They cannot pass our place of vantage here,
To choose them out a likelier. Let our lines
Lie close on either side the hollow strait
Flanked as the hill slopes by those cottage walls,
While here the head of our main force stands fast
With wings flung each way forth: that narrow street
Shall take them snared and naked.

Sir W. Douglas. I beseech you,
If you suspect no taint or part in me
Of treason in our kin, that I may have
The first of this day's danger.

Murray. No man here,
Of all whose hearts are armed for Scotland, hath
First place in this day's peril, no man last;
But all one part of peril, and one place
To stand and strike, if God be good to us,
In the last field that shall be fought for her
Upon this quarrel. Who are they that lead
The main of the queen's battle?

Kirkaldy. On their left
Lord Herries, and Argyle in front; with him
Claude Hamilton and James of Evandale
Bring up their turbulent ranks.

Lindsay. Why, these keep none
That crowd against us; horse and mingled foot
Confound each other hurtling as they come
Sheer up between the houses.

Murray. Some default
That maims the general strength has in their need
Held them an hour delaying; our harquebusmen,
Two thousand tried, the best half of our foot,
Keep the way fast each side even to this height
Where stands our strength in the open. We shall have,
If aught win through of all their chivalry,
Some sharp half-hour of hand-to-hand at last
Ere one thrust other from this brow. — Lord Hume,
Keep you the rear of our right wing that looks
Toward Herries and his horsemen; Ochiltree,
Stand you beside him; Grange and Lindsay here
Shall bide with me the main front of their fight
When these break through our guard. Let word be given

That no man when the day is won shall dare
Upon our side to spill one drop of blood
That may be spared of them that yield or fly. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE X. — ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD.

Enter HERRIES *and* SEYTON, *with their soldiers.*

Herries. If they of our part hold the hill-top yet,
For all our leader's loss we have the day.
Seyton. They stand this half-hour locked on both sides fast,
And grappling to the teeth. I would to God
When for faint heart and very fear Argyle
Fell from his horse before the battle met,
The devil had writhed his neck round; whose delay
At point to charge first maimed us; else by this
We had scattered them as crows. Make up again,
And drive their broken lines in on the rear
While those in front stand doubtful. Charge once more,
Enter OCHILTREE *and* HUME, *with soldiers.*
And all this side is ours. — Lord Ochiltree,
Yield, in the queen's name.
Ochiltree. In the king's I stand
To bid his traitors battle.
[*They fight;* OCHILTREE *falls.*
Herries. Stand thou too,
Or give us place: I had rather have to-day
At my sword's end thee than a meaner man
To try this cause.
Hume. This edge of mine shall try
Which side and steel be truer.
[*They fight;* HUME *is wounded.*
Seyton. God and the queen!
Set on; this height once ours, this day is too,
And all days after.

Herries. Halt not yet, good friends,
Till with our bright swords we hav
crowned the hill
Whereon they stand at grapple. Clos
again,
And we ride lords at large of the fre
field
Whence these fall hurled in sunder.
Seyton. To the height!
Our fellows are fast locked yet with ou
foes:
Make up there to their comfort.
Enter LINDSAY, KIRKALDY, SIR WI
LIAM DOUGLAS, *young* OCHILTRE
with soldiers.
Lindsay. Sirs, not yet:
Ere ye win through, there be mor
spears to break
Than there in fight are fastened. Stanc
or yield.
Herries. The Highland folk tha
doubtfully held off
Are fallen upon our flank: hear you th
noise?
Back, sirs, bear back: we are sped.
[*Exit with his follower*
Seyton. The day is gone:
Let life go after; for I will not fly
To meet my queen's face as a beate
man.
Enter MURRAY, MORTON, *etc., wi*
soldiers.
Murray. Charge once, and the
sheathe swords; the field
ours:
They fly now both ways broken. Som
one spur
To bid those knaves that howl upon th
rear
Cut short their quest of blood. The
were too slack
Who are now so hot, when first th
hunt was up:
They shall not flesh those fangs on fl
ing men
That in the fight were bloodless.
Seyton. Men, stand fast;
Let not the currish cry of Highla
hounds
Bark on your fugitive quarry: here
man
May fall not like a stag or harri
hare,

But die more soldier-like than in the toils
With their loud pack upon him.
Young Ochiltree. Die then here,
And pay me for my father, if God please
My life with his shall lie not on thy hand,
But thine on mine as forfeit.
[*They fight;* SEYTON *falls.*
Murray. Slay him not: say, put up your sword.
Young Ochiltree. Sir, pardon me. There bleeds my father yet: he too shall die.
Murray. Young man, nor he nor any of his part
When I say, Live. Take up your sword again;
And by this hand that struck it from your own
Be ruled, and learn what loyal use it hath,
Which is not on its prisoner. Send forth word
That none take life of any man that yields.
Pursue, but slay not; for the day is won,
And this last battle ended that shall see
By Scottish hands the reek of Scotsmen slain
Defame the face of Scotland. While I live,
If God as on this day be good to her,
Her eyes shall look on her own blood no more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE XI. — THE HEIGHTS NEAR LANGSIDE.

The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, FLEMING, BOYD, *and young* MAXWELL.

Queen. This is the last time I shall look on war:
Upon this day I know my fate is set
As on a sword's point. Does the fight stand still,
That we see nothing on that hill's brow stir
Where both sides lashed together?
Fleming. If the light
Fell mine eyes truth that reel with watching, both
Stand with spears crossed and locked so hard, and points
So fast inwound with such inveteracy,
That steel can thrust not steel an inch away,
Nor foot push foot a hair's-breadth back that hangs
On the hill's edge, and yields not. Hark! the noise
Grows sharper and more various in its cry
Than first it was: there comes upon the day
Some change for good or ill; but for my charge,
I would not say, *Would God my hand were there!*
But take its chance upon it.
Queen. Be content
To stand this day our soldier at her side
Who will not live to lay such charge again
On them that love her. Lo there! on the left
They charge again from our part.
Maxwell. There it is
My father fights: his horse are they that make
The hill's length rock and lighten as a sea.
Look where the waves meet as that wind of steeds
Sweeps them together; how they reel and fall
There with the shock from under of the storm
That takes in rear and breaks their guard, and leaves
The right wing of the rebels cloven in twain,
And in the cleft their first men fallen that stood
Against the sea-breach. Oh! this gallant day
Shows us our fortune fair as her fair face
For whom we came to seek it, and the crown
That it gives back more glorious.
Queen. If we knew
How fares our van — Nay, go not from me one,
Lest we be scattered.
Boyd. Hear you not a cry
As from the rear, a note of ruin, sent

Higher than the noise of horsemen; and therewith
A roar of fire as though the artillery there
Spake all at once its heart untimely out?
Pray God our powder be not spent by chance,
And in its waste undo us!
Queen. My heart is sick,
Yet shall it not subdue me while my will
Hath still a man's strength left. I was not thus —
I will not think what ever I have been.
The worst day lasts no longer than a day,
And its worst hour hath but an hour of life
Wherein to work us evil.
Mary Beaton. Here comes one
Hot-spurred with haste, and pale with this hour's news:
Now shall we know what work it had to do,
And what the next hour may.
Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS.
George Douglas. The day is lost.
There is but one way with us; here we stand
As in death's hand already. You must fly,
Madam, while time be left or room for flight,
As if there be I know not.
Fleming. Is the van
Broken?
George Douglas. Look up where late it stood so fast
That well-nigh for an hour the grappling ranks
Were so enlinked in front, the men behind
That fired across the rank of them before,
And hurled their pistols in their enemies' face
Above their comrades' heads that held the van
Saw them yet reeking on the spear-shafts lodged
That caught them flatlong fallen athwart the staves
Fixed opposite and level, till a shot
Slew him that led behind the artillery up
As the first round was ended on our part,
And straight a gunner's linstock dropped, and gave
Fire to the powder-wagon.
Maxwell. But the horse —
We saw my father's with Lord Seyton's horse
Hurl up against the left side round the hill,
And break their right wing in the rear.
George Douglas. Ye saw?
But not who brought them rescue, and bore back
Your father's force with might and ruin: Grange
And Lindsay, with my brother third, who fights
With the more bitter heart and hate to-day
For our name's sake to purge him of my deed,
And wreak him on my friends; and would to God,
But for the service' sake I had to do,
He had met me whom perchance he sought, and slain,
Ere I had borne this news out of the fight
To bid you fly!
Queen. Where will God set mine end?
I am wearied of this flying from death to death
That is my life, and man's: where'er I go,
From God and death I fly not; and even here
It may be they must find me.
Mary Beaton. Nay, not yet:
Take heart again, and fly.
Queen. Oh! this I knew, —
Even by thine eyes I knew it a great while since
As now by mine. Our end of fear is come,
That casts out hope as well. Let us make hence.
Perchance our help is in Dumbarton yet,
Upon the rock where I would fain at first

lave set my feet. — How say you, Flem-
ing, now?
lay we there make us fast?
George Douglas. The ways are
thronged
/ith arms and noise of enemies;
everywhere
he land is full of death and deadly
cries
rom throats that gape for blood; the
regent's horse
lold all the highway; and the straiter
lanes
:and thick with peasant folk whose
hands are armed
/ith staves and sickles in their rage
caught up
o strike at you for fault of sword or
pike
/herewith to charge us flying: no way
is left
at south to Galloway and Lord Her-
ries' land,
/here you may breathe but for a
doubtful day
the sea's sight of refuge.
Maxwell. In God's name,
ake his good counsel, madam; as you
know
ie noble Douglas wise and true, be-
lieve
o shall you find my father's men and
mine
this great need.
Queen. Come, help me then to horse;
I must ride some hundred miles to
breathe,
s we must fly no less, I think, or fall
nong our foes that follow, in my
mind
ie worst it were not, nor the unkind-
liest death,
o die in saddle. I will not give again,
please it God, into mine enemies'
hands
y body up for bondage. Twice or
thrice
iave ridden hard by stars of March
or May,
ith false or true men to my left and
right,
ie wild night through, for death or
kingly life;
And if I ride now with few friends at
hand,
I have none false of them; or if as
once
One ride with me that had my hate
alive,
Who rode with me to his own grave,
and now
Holds me in chase toward mine, — O
thou that wast
My hate and husband, whom these men
to-day
Take on them to revenge, and in thy
name
Turn all men's hearts against me that
were born
Mine, and all swords that served me!
if thou be
A shadow at hand, a ghost unrecon-
ciled,
That waits to take his triumph, hear
and see
If in this hour that smites me, which is
thine,
Thou find one thought in me that bows
my heart,
One pang that turns it from the thing
it was,
One pulse that moves me to repent or
fear
For what was done or shall be; if thou
have
But so much power upon me to be
called
Less hateful or more fearful, and thy
death
With aught of dread have clothed the
thought of thee
That thy life had not; if thou seest me
fly,
Then must thou see too that thou shalt
not see,
In death or life, one part of spirit or
sense
In me that calls thee master. To God's
hand
I give the rest; but in mine own I hold
The perfect power for good or evil
days
To keep the heart I had, and on my-
self
Lose not one jot of lordship: so may
God

Love me no less, and be no slower, I think,
To help my soul than theirs more vile than mine
And made for chance to mar, whereon their fate
Has power as on their bodies. If he will,
Now should he help, or never; for we leave
A field more fatal to us, and day more foul,
Than ever cast out hope. I am loath to go
More than to die; yet, come what will soe'er,
I shall no more. — Thou told'st me not of this,
[*To* MARY BEATON.
But yet I learnt it of thee. Come, we have
One dark day less of doom to see and live,
Who have seen this, and die not. Stay by me:
I know thou wilt; if I should bid thee go,
It were but even as if I bade thee stay
Who hast as far to flee from death as I.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE XII. — DUNDRENNAN ABBEY.

The QUEEN *and* HERRIES.

Queen. Talk not to me of France: this man it was
That gave his tongue to serve my kinsmen's plea,
Who fain had seen me plight at Hamilton
To their Arbroath my hand and kingdom; nay,
I will not seek my fate at Catherine's hand,
Nor on those lips that were my mother's watch
My life hang weighed between a word and smile,
Nor on that sleek face of the Florentine
Read my doom writ, nor in her smooth swart cheek
See the blood brighten with desire o mine.
I will not live or die upon her tongue
Whose hate were glad to give me death or life
More hateful from her giving; and I know
How she made proffer to my last year's lords
To take me from their bondage to he own,
And shut my days up cloistered; ever such love
Should France afford me now that i men's sight
I stand yet lower, as fallen from thi year's hope
To live discrowned forever. Tell him this
Who rode with you behind mè from the field,
And bid him bear his mistress word of me
As one that thinks not to be made th mean
For them to weave alliance with m foes,
And with the purchase of my bartered blood
Buy back their power in Scotland.

Herries. I shall say it.

Yet this man's friendship, madam might find faith,
Who by so wild a way has followe you
To this third day that sees your fligh at end,
Where you may sit some forty day secure
In trust and guard of mine.

Queen. Ay, here I might,
Were I well weary with my two night sleep
On this hard earth that was my nake bed
Whom it casts out of kingdom; bu my lord,
For thirty leagues and more of ridde ground,
And two days' fare of peasants' mea and milk,
I am not yet nigher but by two days t death,

or spent in spirit for weariness or fear,
or in my body broken, that my need
ıould hold me here in bonds, or on your faith
ay a new charge of danger. Here, you say,
nd Beaumont with you, I may bide awhile
ıe levy of my friends whose rallying force
ay gather to me, or in their default
ence to Dumbarton may I pass by sea,
r forth to France with safer sails, and prove
hat faith is there in friendship. Now my mind
nowise here to tarry: your true love
ıall not for guerdon of its trust and care
e tried again with peril, that as well
ay be put by for your faith's sake and mine
mutually made much of; nor shall they,
hose wounds run red yet from their regent's hand
ıat on this border laid so sore a scourge
late their blood bore witness, for my sake
give their blood again, or lose their faith
ıat should for me be proven, and being found true
ing them to death should we twice fail, or false
ırn their safe life to shame. This shall not be;
t I, content to make no trial of these,
ill hold them true, and leave them unessayed
live in honor. Friends I yet should have
hose peace and life lie not in those men's hands
at would make prey of mine; their faith is firm
d their hearts great as mine own hope in them
ho look toward me from England; all the north
No less desires me than I need their love,
To lift our creed and cause up that lies low,
But wounded not to death. I have their names
Who first I think will meet me face to face,
And lay their loyal hands in mine, and pledge
Their noble heads for surety; lord and knight
Whose fathers yielded up their lives for faith
Shall fail not now to seek me cast out hence,
And gird me fast with all their following round
And stalwart musters of their spearmen raised
To do me service of stout heart and steel
For these lords' sake that call me lady; names
That bear the whole might of this northern land
Upon their blazon, and the grace and strength
Of their old honor with them to that side
That they shall serve on; first the two great earls,
Then Dacre, Norton, Swinburne, Markinfield,
With all their houses, all the border's flower
Of ancient faith and fame; had I but these
To rise up when I call, and do me right,
I were not poorly friended, with no more
Than this for trust to lean on. But I think
To find not such friends only as their name
And cause should make in danger fast to mine,
To link our names in all men's eyes that read
Of faith in man forever: even the queen
My sister's self shall fight upon my side,
Being either found my friend for whom she swore,

If I were slain, to fill this land with fires,
Or, casting off my cause and me, stand up
As much their enemy that partake my faith
As mine who lack not friends in all her land
That in this cause cast off will strike at her
For God's sake on my party. But indeed
I look to find not such a foe of her
As should have heart or wit to fight with me,
Though she had will who has not; for her mind,
Still moving like a blown and barren sea,
Has yet not ever set so far toward storm
Or so much shifted from its natural tide
As to seem safe or prosperous for their sails
Who traffic for my ruin; and I fear
No wind of change that may breathe sharp on me
When once I stand in mine own name to speak
Before her face and England's. If she will,
By her shall I come back to reign her friend:
If not by her, then by their loves and hands
Who shall put off her sovereignty for mine.
There is not and there needs no better way
Than here lies fair before my feet, which yet
Are not so tired but they may tread it through
To the good end. My heart is higher again
Than ere that field it was, I know not why,
Which sent me hither. You shall write for me
Word to the warden of Carlisle, and say
Your queen seeks covert for her crownless head
With him the first in England; and thereon
Ere he send answer, or to-morrow set,
Will I pass over.

Herries. I would fain believe
His queen were true of heart, and all your friends
As strong to serve as faithful: yet may she
Have better will than she has power to make,
As it would be, your servant; and the land
Is many-minded, rent with doubt in twain,
And full of fears and factions. You may pass,
Even in this hope that now builds up your heart,
To find less help at no less need than here
On darker ways and deadlier: yet your will
Shall if it hold be done.

Queen. Despatch, and write:
To stand before the gate of days to be,
And beat their doors for entrance, is more pain
Than to pass in, and look on life or death.
Here will I sleep within your ward to-night,
And then no more in Scotland. Nay, make haste:
I would those hours were past that hold me here.

SCENE XIII. — THE SHORE OF SOLWAY FIRTH.

The QUEEN, MARY BEATON, HERRIES, GEORGE DOUGLAS, *Page and Attendants.*

Queen. Is not the tide yet full?

Herries. Come half an hour,
And it will turn; but ere that ebb begin
Let me once more desire your pardon though
I plead against your pleasure. Here you stand
Not yet dethroned from royal hope, not yet

iscrowned of your great name, whose natural power
ith here forgets not, nor man's loyal love
eaves off to honor : but gone hence, your name
but a stranger's, subject to men's laws,
ien and liable to control and chance
at are the lords of exile, and command
e days and nights of fugitives; your hope
es of strange breath, or lives between strange lips ;
d nor your will nor only God's beside
master of your peace of life, but theirs
ho, being the lords of land that harbors you,
ve your life leave to endure their empire. What
n man do to you that a rebel may,
hich fear might deem as bad as banishment?
t death, not bonds, are bitterer than his day
whom the sun looks forth of a strange sky,
hose thirst drinks water from strange hands, whose lips
t strangers' bread for hunger; who lies down
a strange dark, and sleeps not, and the light
kes his eyes weep for their own morning, seen
hills that helped to make him man, and fields
hose flowers grew round his heart's root; day like night
nies him, and the stars and airs of heaven
e as their eyes and tongues who know him not.
not to banishment: the world is great,
t each has but his own land in the world.
ere is one bosom that gives each man milk, —
One country, like one mother: none sleeps well
Who lies between strange breasts; no lips drink life
That seek it from strange fosters. Go not hence:
You shall find no man's faith or love on earth
Like theirs that here cleave to you.
Queen. I have found,
And think to find, no hate of men on earth
Like theirs that here beats on me. Hath this earth
Which sent me forth a five-years' child, and queen
Not even of mine own sorrows, to come back
A widowed girl out of the fair warm sun
Into the grave's mouth of a dolorous land
And life like death's own shadow, that began
With three days' darkness, — hath this earth of yours
That made mine enemies, at whose iron breast
They drank the milk of treason; this hard nurse,
Whose rocks and storms have reared no violent thing
So montrous as men's angers, whose wild minds
Were fed from hers and fashioned; this that bears
None but such sons as being my friends are weak,
And strong, being most my foes, — hath it such grace
As I should cling to, or such virtue found
In some part of its evil as my heart
Should fear, being free, to part from? Have I lived,
Since I came here in shadow and storm, three days
Out of the storm and shadow? Have I seen
Such rest, such hope, such respite from despair,
As thralls and prisoners in strong darkness may

Before the light look on them? Hath there come
One chance on me of comfort, one poor change,
One possible content that was not born
Of hope to break forth of these bonds, or made
Of trust in foreign fortune? Here, I knew,
Could never faith nor love nor comfort breed
While I sat fast in prison: ye, my friends,
The few men and the true men that were mine,
What were ye but what I was, and what help
Hath each love had of other, yours of mine,
Mine of your faith, but change of fight and flight,
Fear and vain hope and ruin? Let me go,
Who have been but grief and danger to my friends:
It may be I shall come with power again
To give back all their losses, and build up
What for my sake was broken.
Herries. Did I know it,
Yet were I loath to bid you part, and find
What there you go to seek; but knowing it not,
My heart sinks in me, and my spirit is sick,
To think how this fair foot once parted hence
May rest thus light on Scottish ground no more.
Queen. It shall tread heavier when it steps again
On earth which now rejects it; I shall live
To bruise their heads who wounded me at heel,
When I shall set it on their necks. Come, friends,
I think the fisher's boat hath hoised up sail
That is to bear none but one friend and me:
Here must my true men and thei queen take leave,
And each keep thought of other. — M fair page,
Before the man's change darken o your chin,
I may come back to ride with you a rein
To a more fortunate field. howe'e that be,
Ride you right on with better hap, an live
As true to one of merrier days tha mine
As on that night to Mary once you queen.
Douglas, I have not won a word o you:
What would you do to have me tarry?
George Douglas. Die.
Queen. I lack not love, it seems, ther at my last.
That word was bitter; yet I blame i not,
Who would not have sweet words upo my lips
Nor in mine ears at parting. I shoul go,
And stand not here as on a stage t play
My last part out in Scotland: I hav been
Too long a queen too little. By m life,
I know not what should hold me her or turn
My foot back from the boat-side, sav the thought
How at Lochleven I last set foo aboard,
And with what hope, and to what end and now
I pass not out of prison to my friends,
But out of all friends' help to banis ment. —
Farewell, Lord Herries.
Herries. God go with my queen,
And bring her back with better friend than I!
Queen. Methinks the sand yet clea ing to my foot
Should not with no more words b shaken off,

Nor this my country from my parting eyes
Pass unsaluted; for who knows what year
May see us greet hereafter? Yet take heed,
Ye that have ears, and hear me; and take note,
Ye that have eyes, and see with what last looks
Mine own take leave of Scotland. Seven years since
Did I take leave of my fair land of France,
My joyous mother, mother of my joy,
Weeping; and now with many a woe between,
And space of seven years' darkness, I depart
From this distempered and unnatural earth
That casts me out unmothered, and go forth
On this gray, sterile, bitter, gleaming sea
With neither tears nor laughter, but a heart
That from the softest temper of its blood
Is turned to fire and iron. If I live,
If God pluck not all hope out of my hand,
If aught of all mine prosper, I that go
Shall come back to men's ruin, as a flame
The wind bears down, that grows against the wind,
And grasps it with great hands, and wins its way,
And wins its will, and triumphs; so shall I
Let loose the fire of all my heart to feed
On these that would have quenched it. I will make
From sea to sea one furnace of the land,
Whereon the wind of war shall beat its wings
Till they wax faint with hopeless hope of rest,
And with one rain of men's rebellious blood
Extinguish the red embers. I will leave
No living soul of their blaspheming faith
Who war with monarchs: God shall see me reign
As he shall reign beside me, and his foes
Lie at my foot with mine; kingdoms and kings
Shall from my heart take spirit, and at my soul
Their souls be kindled to devour for prey
The people that would make its prey of them,
And leave God's altar stripped of sacrament
As all kings' heads of sovereignty, and make
Bare as their thrones his temples; I will set
Those old things of his holiness on high
That are brought low, and break beneath my feet
These new things of men's fashion; I will sit
And see tears flow from eyes that saw me weep,
And dust and ashes and the shadow of death
Cast from the block beneath the axe that falls
On heads that saw me humbled; I will do it,
Or bow mine own down to no royal end,
And give my blood for theirs if God's will be,
But come back never as I now go forth
With but the hate of men to track my way,
And not the face of any friend alive.

Mary Beaton. But I will never leave you till you die.

MARY STUART: A TRAGEDY.

ἀντὶ μὲν ἐχθρᾶς γλώσσης ἐχθρὰ
γλῶσσα τελεισθω· τοὐφειλόμενον
πράσσουσα δικη μέγ᾽ αὐτεί·

ἀντὶ δὲ πληγῆς φονίας φονίαν
πληγὴν τινέτω· δράσαντι παθεῖν,
τριγέρων μῦθος τάδε φωνεῖ.

ÆSCH. *Cho.* 309–315.

I DEDICATE THIS PLAY, NO LONGER, AS THE FIRST PART OF THE TRILOGY WHICH IT COMPLETES WAS DEDICATED, TO THE GREATEST EXILE, BUT SIMPLY TO THE GREATEST MAN OF FRANCE; TO THE CHIEF OF LIVING POETS; TO THE FIRST DRAMATIST OF HIS AGE; TO MY BELOVED AND REVERED MASTER, VICTOR HUGO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARY STUART.
MARY BEATON.
QUEEN ELIZABETH.
BARBARA MOWBRAY.
LORD BURGHLEY.
SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM.
WILLIAM DAVISON.
ROBERT DUDLEY, *Earl of Leicester.*
GEORGE TALBOT, *Earl of Shrewsbury.*
EARL OF KENT.
HENRY CAREY, *Lord Hunsdon.*
SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON.
SIR THOMAS BROMLEY, *Lord Chancellor.*
POPHAM, *Attorney-General.*
EGERTON, *Solicitor-General.*
GAWDY, *the Queen's Sergeant.*
SIR AMYAS PAULET.
SIR DREW DRURY.
SIR THOMAS GORGES.
SIR WILLIAM WADE.
SIR ANDREW MELVILLE.
ROBERT BEALE, *Clerk of the Council.*
CURLE *and* NAU, *Secretaries to the Queen of Scots.*
GORION, *her Apothecary.*
FATHER JOHN BALLARD, } *Conspirators.*
ANTHONY BABINGTON, }
CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE, }
JOHN SAVAGE, }
CHARLES TILNEY, }
EDWARD ABINGTON, }
THOMAS SALISBURY, }
ROBERT BARNWELL, }
THOMAS PHILLIPPS, *Secretary to Walsingham.*
M. DE CHÂTEAUNEUF.
M. DE BELLIÈVRE.

Commissioners, Privy Councillors, Sheriffs, Citizens, Officers, and Attendants.

TIME, FROM AUGUST 14, 1586, TO FEBRUARY 18, 1587.

ACT I.—ANTHONY BABINGTON.

SCENE I.—BABINGTON'S LODGING. *A Veiled Picture on the Wall.*

Enter BABINGTON, TICHBORNE, TILNEY, ABINGTON, SALISBURY, *and* BARNWELL.

Babington. Welcome, good friends,
and welcome this good day
That casts out hope, and brings in cer
tainty
To turn raw spring to summer. Now
not long
The flower that crowns the front of al
our faiths
Shall bleach to death in prison; now
the trust
That took the night with fire as of a sta
Grows red and broad as sunrise in ou
sight,

Who held it dear and desperate once, now sure,
But not more dear, being surer. In my hand
I hold this England and her brood, and all
That time out of the chance of all her fate
Makes hopeful or makes fearful: days and years,
Triumphs and changes bred for praise or shame
From the unborn womb of these unknown, are ours
That stand yet noteless here; ours even as God's,
Who puts them in our hand as his, to wield
And shape to service godlike. None of you
But this day strikes out of the scroll of death,
And writes apart immortal: what we would,
That have we; what our fathers, brethren, peers,
Bled and beheld not, died and might not win,
That may we see, touch, handle, hold it fast,
May take to bind our brows with. By my life,
I think none ever had such hap alive
As ours upon whose plighted lives are set
The whole good hap and evil of the State,
And of the Church of God, and world of men,
And fortune of all crowns and creeds that hang
Now on the creed and crown of this our land,
To bring forth fruit to our resolve, and bear
What sons to time it please us; whose mere will
Is father of the future.

Tilney. Have you said?

Babington. I cannot say too much of so much good.

Tilney. Say nothing, then, a little, and hear one while:
Your talk struts high and swaggers loud for joy,
And safely may perchance, or may not, here;
But why to-day we know not.

Babington. No, I swear,
Ye know not yet, no man of us but one,
No man on earth; one woman knows, and I,
I that best know her, the best begot of man
And noblest: no king born so kingly souled,
Nor served of such brave servants.

Tichborne. What, as we?

Babington. Is there one vein in one of all our hearts
That is not blown aflame as fire with air
With even the thought to serve her? And, by God,
They that would serve had need be bolder found
Than common kings find servants.

Salisbury. Well, your cause?
What need or hope has this day's heat brought forth
To blow such fire up in you?

Babington Hark you, sirs:
The time is come, ere I shall speak of this,
To set again the seal on our past oaths,
And bind their trothplight faster than it is
With one more witness; not for shameful doubt,
But love and perfect honor. Gentlemen,
Whose souls are brethren sealed and sworn to mine,
Friends that have taken on your hearts and hands
The selfsame work and weight of deed as I, —
Look on this picture: from its face today
Thus I pluck off the muffled mask, and bare
Its likeness and our purpose. Ay, look here;
None of these faces but are friends of each,
None of these lips unsworn to all the rest,

None of these hands unplighted. Know ye not
What these have bound their souls to? And myself,
I that stand midmost painted here of all,
Have I not right to wear of all this ring
The topmost flower of danger? Who but I
Should crown and close this goodly circle up
Of friends I call my followers? There ye stand,
Fashioned all five in likeness of mere life,
Just your own shapes, even all the man but speech,
As in a speckless mirror; Tichborne, thou,
My nearest heart and brother next in deed,
Then Abington, there Salisbury, Tilney there,
And Barnwell, with the brave bright Irish eye
That burns with red remembrance of the blood
Seen drenching those green fields turned brown and gray
Where fire can burn not faith out, nor the sword
That hews the boughs off lop the root there set
To spread in spite of axes. Friends, take heed:
These are not met for nothing here in show,
Nor for poor pride set forth and boastful heart
To make dumb brag of the undone deed, and wear
The ghost and mockery of a crown unearned
Before their hands have wrought it for their heads
Out of a golden danger, glorious doubt,
An act incomparable, by all time's mouths
To be more blessed and cursed than all deeds done
In this swift fiery world of ours, that drives
On such hot wheels toward evil goal or good,
And desperate each as other; but tha each,
Seeing here himself and knowing wh here, may set
His whole heart's might on the instan work, and hence
Pass as a man rechristened, bathe anew,
And swordlike tempered from the touc that turns
Dull iron to the two-edged fang of stee
Made keen as fire by water. So, say,
Let this dead likeness of you, wrough with hands
Whereof ye wist not, working for min end
Even as ye gave them work, unwittingly
Quicken with life your vows and pur poses
To rid the beast that troubles all th world
Out of men's sight and God's. Are y not sworn
Or stand not ready girt at perilous nee
To strike under the cloth of state itsel
The very heart we hunt for?
Tichborne. Let not then
Too high a noise of hound and hor give note
How hot the hunt is on it, and ere w shoot
Startle the royal quarry; lest your cry
Give tongue too loud on such a trai and we
More piteously be rent of our ow hounds
Than he that went forth huntsman to and came
To play the hart he hunted.
Babington. Ay, but, see,
Your apish poet's-likeness holds n here,
If he that fed his hounds on his change flesh
Was charmed out of a man, and baye to death,
But through pure anger of a perfe maid;
For she that should of huntsmen tur us harts

Is Dian but in mouths of her own knaves,
And in paid eyes hath only godhead on,
And light to dazzle none but them to death.
Yet I durst well abide her, and proclaim
As goddess-like as maiden.
Barnwell. Why, myself
Was late at court in presence, and her eyes
Fixed somewhile on me full in face; yet, 'faith,
I felt for that no lightning in my blood,
Nor blast in mine as of the sun at noon
To blind their balls with godhead: no, ye see,
I walk yet well enough.
Abington. She gazed at you?
Barnwell. Yes, 'faith: yea, surely: take a Puritan oath
To seal my faith for Catholic. What, God help,
Are not mine eyes yet whole, then? am I blind
Or maimed or scorched, and know not? By my head,
I find it sit yet none the worse for fear
To be so thunder-blasted.
Abington. Hear you, sirs?
Tichborne. I was not fain to hear it.
Barnwell. Which was he
Spake of one changed into a hart? by God,
There be some hearts here need no charm, I think,
To turn them hares of hunters; or if deer,
Not harts but hinds, and rascal.
Babington. Peace, man, peace!
Let not at least this noble cry of hounds
Flash fangs against each other. See what verse
I bade write under on the picture here:
These are my comrades, whom the peril's self
Draws to it. How say you? will not all in the end
Prove fellows to me? how should one fall off
Whom danger lures and scares not? Tush! take hands;
It was to keep them fast in all time's sight
I bade my painter set you here, and me
Your loving captain; gave him sight of each
And order of us all in amity.
And if this yet not shame you, or your hearts
Be set as boys' on wrangling, yet, behold,
I pluck as from my heart this witness forth [*Taking out a letter.*
To what a work we are bound to,—even her hand
Whom we must bring from bondage, and again
Be brought of her to honor. This is she,
Mary the queen, sealed of herself and signed
As mine assured good friend forever. Now,
Am I more worth, or Ballard?
Tilney. He it was
Bade get her hand and seal to allow of all
That should be practised; he is wise.
Babington. Ay, wise!
He was in peril too, he said, God wot,
And must have surety of her, he; but I,
'Tis I that have it, and her heart and trust,
See all here else, her trust and her good love,
Who knows mine own heart of mine own hand writ
And sent her for assurance.
Salisbury. This we know:
What we would yet have certified of you
Is her own heart sent back, you say, for yours.
Babington. I say? not I, but proof says here, cries out
Her perfect will and purpose. Look you, first
She writes me what good comfort hath she had
To know by letter mine estate, and thus
Reknit the bond of our intelligence,
As grief was hers to live without the same
This great while past; then lovingly commends
In me her own desire to avert betimes

Our enemies' counsel to root out our faith
With ruin of us all; for so she hath shown
All Catholic princes what long since they have wrought
Against the king of Spain; and all this while
The Catholics naked here to all misuse
Fall off in numbered force, in means and power,
And if we look not to it shall soon lack strength
To rise and take that hope or help by the hand
Which time shall offer them; and see for this
What heart is hers! she bids you know of me
Though she were no part of this cause, who holds
Worthless her own weighed with the general weal, —
She will be still most willing to this end
To employ therein her life and all she hath
Or in this world may look for.

Tichborne. This rings well;
But by what present mean prepared doth hers
Confirm your counsel? or what way set forth
So to prevent our enemies with good speed
That at the goal we find them not, and there
Fall as men broken?

Babington. Nay, what think you, man,
Or what esteem of her, that hope should lack
Herein her counsel? hath she not been found
Most wary still, clear-spirited, bright of wit,
Keen as a sword's edge, as a bird's eye swift,
Man-hearted ever? First, for crown and base
Of all this enterprise, she bids me here
Examine with good heed of good event
What power of horse and foot among us all
We may well muster, and in every shire
Choose out what captain for them, i we lack
For the main host a general, — as, in deed,
Myself being bound to bring her out o bonds,
Or here with you cut off the hereti queen,
Could take not this on me, — wha havens, towns,
What ports to north and west and south may we
Assure ourselves to hold in certai hand
For entrance and receipt of help from France,
From Spain, or the Low Countries; i what place
Draw our main head together; for how long
Raise for this threefold force of foreig friends
Wage and munition, or what harbor choose
For these to land; or what provisio crave
Of coin at need or armor; by wha means
The six her friends deliberate to pro ceed;
And, last, the manner how to get he forth
From this last hold wherein she newl lies:
These heads hath she set down, an bids me take
Of all seven points counsel and com mon care
With as few friends as may be of th chief
Ranged on our part for actors; an thereon
Of all devised with diligent speed de spatch
Word to the ambassador of Spain i France,
Who, to the experience past of all th estate
Here on this side aforetime that he hath
Shall join goodwill to serve us.

Tilney. Ay, no more?
Of us no more I mean, who being mos near

o the English queen our natural mistress born
ake on our hands, her household pensioners',
he stain and chiefest peril of her blood
ned by close violence under trust; no word,
o care shown further of our enterprise
hat flowers to fruit for her sake?
Babington. Fear not that;
bide till we draw thither — ay — she bids
et first assurance of such help to come,
nd take thereafter, what before were vain,
wift order to provide arms, horses, coin,
Therewith to march at word from every shire
iven by the chief; and save these principals
et no man's knowledge less in place partake
ne privy ground we move on, but set forth
or entertainment of the meaner ear
e do but fortify us against the plot
aid of the Puritan part in all this realm
hat have their general force now drawn to head
the Low Countries, whence being home returned
ney think to spoil us utterly, and usurp
ot from her only and all else lawful heirs
ne kingly power, but from their queen that is
s we may let the bruit fly forth disguised)
rest that which now she hath, if she for fear
ake not their yoke upon her, and therefrom
atch like infection from plague-tainted air
ne purulence of their purity; with which plea
e so may stablish our confederacies
wrought but for defence of lands, lives, goods,
om them that would cut off our faith and these;
No word writ straight or given directly forth
Against the queen, but rather showing our will
Firm to maintain her and her lineal heirs,
Myself (she saith) *not named.* Ha! gallant souls,
Hath our queen's craft no savor of sweet wit,
No brain to help her heart with?
Tichborne. But our end —
No word of this yet?
Babington. And a good word here,
And worth our note, good friend: being thus prepared,
Time then shall be to set our hands on work,
And straight thereon take order that she may
Be suddenly transported out of guard,
Not tarrying till our foreign force come in,
Which then must make the hotter haste; and seeing
We can make no day sure for our design,
Nor certain hour appointed when she might
Find other friends at hand on spur of the act
To take her forth of prison, ye should have
About you always, or in court at least,
Scouts furnished well with horses of good speed
To bear the tiding to her and them whose charge
Shall be to bring her out of bonds, that these
May be about her ere her keeper have word
What deed is freshly done, — in any case,
Ere he can make him strong within the house
Or bear her forth of it; and need it were
By divers ways to send forth two or three,
That one may pass if one be stayed; nor this

Should we forget, to assay in the hour of need
To cut the common posts off: by this plot
May we steer safe, and fall not miserably,
As they that labored heretofore herein,
Through over-haste to stir upon this side
Ere surety make us strong of strangers' aid.
And if at first we bring her forth of bonds,
Be well assured, she bids us — as I think
She doubts not me that I should let this slip,
Forget so main a matter — well assured
To set her in the heart of some strong host,
Or strength of some good hold, where she may stay
Till we be mustered, and the ally drawn in.
For should the queen, being scathless of us yet
As we unready, fall upon her flight,
The bird untimely fled from snare to snare
Should find, being caught again, a narrower hold,
Whence she should fly forth never, if cause indeed
Should seem not given to use her worse; and we
Should be with all extremity pursued,
To her more grief; for this should grieve her more
Than what might heaviest fall upon her.

Tilney. Ay?

She hath had, then, work enough to do to weep
For them that bled before: Northumberland,
The choice of all the north, spoiled, banished, slain;
Norfolk, that should have ringed the fourth sad time
The fairest hand wherewith fate ever led
So many a man to deathward, or seal
up
So many an eye from sunlight.

Babington. By my head,

Which is the main stake of this cast
swear
There is none worth more than a te
of hers
That man wears living or that m
might lose,
Borne upright in the sun, or for h
sake
Bowed down by theirs she weeps f
Nay, but hear:
She bids me take most vigilant hee
that all
May prosperously find end assured, a
you
Conclude with me in judgment; to m
self,
As chief of trust in my particular,
Refers you for assurance, and co
mends
To counsel seasonable and time's a
vice
Your common resolution; and again
If the design take yet not hold,
chance
For all our will may turn it, we shou
not
Pursue her transport nor the plot la
else
Of our so baffled enterprise; but say
When this were done we might r
come at her,
Being by mishap close guarded in t
Tower
Or some strength else as dangero
yet, she saith,
For God's sake leave not to proce
herein
To the utmost undertaking; for h
self
At any time shall most contentedly
Die, knowing of our deliverance fr
the bonds
Wherein as slaves we are holden.

Barnwell. So shall I,

Knowing at the least of her enfr
chisement
Whose life were worth the whole blo
shed o' the world
And all men's hearts made empty.

Babington. Ay, good friend,
Here speaks she of your fellows, that some stir
Might be in Ireland labored to begin
Some time ere we take aught on us, that thence
The alarm might spring right on the part opposed
To where should grow the danger: she meantime
Should while the work were even in hand assay
To make the Catholics in her Scotland risc,
And put her son into their hands, that so
No help may serve our enemies thence; again,
That from our plots the stroke may come, she thinks
To have some chief or general head of all
Were now most apt for the instant end; wherein
I branch not off from her in counsel, yet
Conceive not how to send the appointed word
To the earl of Arundel now fast in bonds
Held in the Tower she spake of late, who now
Would have us give him careful note of this,
Him or his brethren; and from oversea
Would have us seek, if he be there at large,
To the young son of dead Northumberland,
And Westmoreland, whose hand and name, we know,
May do much northward; ay, but this we know,
How much his hand was lesser than his name
When proof was put on either; and the lord
Paget, whose power is in some shires of weight
To incline them us-ward; both may now be had,
And some, she saith, of the exiles principal,
If the enterprise be resolute once, with these
May come back darkling; Paget lies in Spain,
Whom we may treat with by his brother's mean,
Charles, who keeps watch in Paris. Then in the end
She bids beware no messenger sent forth
That bears our counsel bear our letters: these
Must through blind hands precede them, or ensue
By ignorant posts, and severally despatched;
And of her sweet wise heart, as we were fools,—
But that I think she fears not,—bids take heed
Of spies among us and false brethren, chief
Of priests already practised on, she saith,
By the enemy's craft against us. What! forsooth,
We have not eyes to set such knaves apart,
And look their wiles through, but should need misdoubt
—Whom shall I say the least on all our side?—
Good Gilbert Gifford with his kind boy's face
That fear's lean self could fear not? But God knows
Woman is wise, but woman: none so bold,
So cunning none, God help the soft sweet wit,
But the fair flesh with weakness taints it: why,
She warns me here of perilous scrolls to keep
That I should never bear about me, seeing
By that fault sank all they that fell before
Who should have walked unwounded else of proof,
Unstayed of justice. But this following word
Hath savor of more judgment: we should let

As little as we may our names be known,
Or purpose here, to the envoy sent from France,
Whom though she hears for honest, we must fear
His master holds the course of his design
Far contrary to this of ours, which known
Might move him to discovery.
Tichborne. Well forewarned:
Fore-armed enough were now that cause at need
Which had but half so good an armor on
To fight false faith or France in
Babington. Peace a while;
Here she winds up her craft. She hath long time sued
To shift her lodging, and for answer hath
None but the castle of Dudley named as meet
To serve this turn; and thither may depart,
She thinks, with parting summer; whence may we
Devise what means about those lands to lay
For her deliverance; who from present bonds
May but by one of three ways be discharged:
When she shall ride forth on the moors that part
Her prison-place from Stafford, where few folk
Use to pass over, on the same day set,
With fifty or threescore men, well horsed and armed,
To take her from her keeper's charge, who rides
With but some score that bear but pistols; next,
To come by deep night round the darkling house,
And fire the barns and stables, which being nigh
Shall draw the household huddling forth to help,
And they that come to serve her, wearing each
A secret sign for note and cognizance,
May some of them surprise the house, whom she
Shall with her servants meet and second; last,
When carts come in at morning, these being met
In the main gateway's midst may by device
Fall or be sidelong overthrown, and we
Make in thereon, and suddenly possess
The house, whence lightly might we bear her forth
Ere help came in of soldiers to relief
Who lie a mile or half a mile away
In several lodgings. But, howe'er this end,
She holds her bounden to me all her days,
Who proffer me to hazard for her love,
And doubtless shall as well esteem of you,
Or scarce less honorably, when she shall know
Your names who serve beneath me; so commends
Her friend to God, and bids me burn the word
That I would wear at heart forever: yet,
Lest this sweet scripture haply write us dead,
Where she set hand I set my lips, and thus
Rend mine own heart with her sweet name, and end.
[*Tears the letter.*
Salisbury. She hath chosen a trusty servant.
Babington. Ay, of me?
What ails you at her choice? was this not I
That laid the ground of all this work and wrought
Your hearts to shape for service? or perchance
The man was you that took this first on him,
To serve her dying and living, and put on
The blood-red name of traitor and the deed
Found for her sake not murderous?

Salisbury. Why, they say
First Gifford put this on you, Ballard next,
Whom he brought over to redeem your heart
Half lost for doubt already, and refresh
The flagging flame that fired it first, and now
Fell faltering half in ashes, whence his breath
Hardly with hard pains quickened it, and blew
The gray to red rekindling.
Babington. Sir, they lie
Who say for fear I faltered, or lost heart
For doubt to lose life after: let such know
It shames me not, though I were slow of will,
To take such work upon my soul and hand
As killing of a queen; being once assured,
Brought once past question, set beyond men's doubts
By witness of God's will borne sensibly,
Meseems I have swerved not.
Salisbury. Ay, when once the word
Was washed in holy water, you would wear
Lightly the name so hallowed of priests' lips
That men spell murderer; but till Ballard spake,
The shadow of her slaying whom we shall strike
Was ice to freeze your purpose.
Tichborne. Friend, what then?
Is this so small a thing, being English born,
To strike the living empire here at heart
That is called England? stab her present state,
Give even her false-faced likeness up to death,
With hands that smite a woman? I that speak,
Ye know me if now my faith be firm, and will
To do faith's bidding; yet it wrings not me
To say I was not quick nor light of heart,
Though moved perforce of will unwillingly,
To take in trust this charge upon me.
Barnwell. I
With all good will would take, and give God thanks,
The charge of all that falter in it: by heaven,
To hear in the end of doubts and doublings heaves
My heart up as with sickness. Why, by this
The heretic harlot that confounds our hope
Should be made carrion, with those following four
That were to wait upon her dead: all five
Live yet to scourge God's servants, and we prate
And threaten here in painting. By my life,
I see no more in us of life or heart
Than in this heartless picture.
Babington. Peace, again.
Our purpose shall not long lack life, nor they
Whose life is deadly to the heart of ours
Much longer keep it: Burghley, Walsingham,
Hunsdon and Knowles, all these four names writ out,
With hers at head they worship, are but now
As those five several letters that spell death,
In eyes that read them right. Give me but faith
A little longer: trust that heart a while
Which laid the ground of all our glories; think
I that was chosen of our queen's friends in France,
By Morgan's hand there prisoner for her sake
On charge of such a deed's device as ours
Commended to her for trustiest, and a man

More sure than might be Ballard and more fit
To bear the burden of her counsels, — I
Can be not undeserving, whom she trusts,
That ye should likewise trust me; seeing at first
She writes me but a thankful word, and this,
God wot, for little service; I return,
For aptest answer and thankworthiest meed,
Word of the usurper's plotted end, and she
With such large heart of trust and liberal faith
As here ye have heard requites me: whom, I think,
For you to trust is no too great thing now
For me to ask and have of all.

Tichborne. Dear friend,
Mistrust has no part in our mind of you
More than in hers; yet she too bids take heed,
As I would bid you take, and let not slip
The least of her good counsels, which to keep
No whit proclaims us colder than herself
Who gives us charge to keep them, and to slight
No whit proclaims us less unserviceable
Who are found too hot to serve her, than the slave
Who for cold heart and fear might fail.

Babington. Too hot!
Why, what man's heart hath heat enough or blood
To give for such good service? Look you, sirs,
This is no new thing for my faith to keep,
My soul to feed its fires with, and my hope
Fix eyes upon for star to steer by: she
That six years hence the boy that I was then,
And page, ye know, to Shrewsbury, gave his faith
To serve and worship with his body and soul
For only lady and queen, with power alone
To lift my heart up and bow down mine eyes
At sight and sense of her sweet sovereignty,
Made thence her man forever; she whose look
Turned all my blood of life to tears and fire,
That going or coming, sad or glad (for yet
She would be somewhile merry, as though to give
Comfort, and ease at heart her servants then
Weep smilingly to be so light of mind,
Saying she was like the bird grown blithe in bonds,
That if too late set free would die for fear,
Or wild birds hunt it out of life; if sad,
Put madness in me for her suffering's sake,
If joyous, for her very love's sake) still
Made my heart mad alike to serve her being
I know not when the sweeter, sad or blithe,
Nor what mood heavenliest of her, all whose change
Was as of stars and sun and moon in heaven, —
She is well content — ye have heard her — she, to die,
If we without her may redeem ourselves,
And loose our lives from bondage; but her friends
Must take, forsooth, good heed they be not, no,
Too hot of heart to serve her! And for me,
Am I so vain a thing of wind and smoke
That your deep counsel must have care to keep
My lightness safe in wardship? I sought none, —
Craved no man's counsel to draw plain my plot,
Need no man's warning to dispose my deed.

Have I not laid of mine own hand a snare
To bring no less a lusty bird to lure
Than Walsingham with proffer of myself
For scout and spy on mine own friends in France
To fill his wise wide ears with large report
Of all things wrought there on our side, and plots
Laid for our queen's sake? and for all his wit
This politic knave misdoubts me not, whom ye
Hold yet too light and lean of wit to pass
Unspied of wise men on our enemies' part,
Who have sealed the subtlest eyes up of them all.

Tichborne. That would I know; for if they be not blind,
But only wink upon your proffer, seeing
More than they let your own eyes find or fear,
Why, there may lurk a fire to burn us all
Masked in them with false blindness.

Babington. Hear you, sirs?
Now, by the faith I had in this my friend,
And by mine own yet flawless toward him, yea
By all true love and trust that holds men fast,
It shames me that I held him in this cause
Half mine own heart, my better hand and eye,
Mine other soul and worthier. Pray you, go:
Let us not hold you; sir, be quit of us;
Go home, lie safe, and give God thanks; lie close,
Keep your head warm and covered. Nay, be wise;
We are fit for no such wise folk's fellowship,
No married man's who being bid forth to fight
Holds his wife's kirtle fitter wear for man
Than theirs who put on iron: I did know it,
Albeit I would not know; this man that was,
This soul and sinew of a noble seed,
Love and the lips that burn a bridegroom's through
Have charmed to deathward, and in steel's good stead
Left him a silken spirit.

Tichborne. By that faith
Which yet I think you have found as fast in me
As ever yours I found, you wrong me more
Than, were I that your words can make me not,
I had wronged myself and all our cause; I hold
No whit less dear, for love's sake even, than love,
Faith, honor, friendship, all that all my days
Was only dear to my desire, till now
This new thing, dear as all these only were,
Made all these dearer. If my love be less
Toward you, toward honor, or this cause, then think
I love my wife not either, — whom you know
How close at heart I cherish, — but in all
Play false alike. Lead now which way you will,
And wear what likeness: though to all men else
It look not smooth, smooth shall it seem to me,
And danger be not dangerous; where you go,
For me shall wildest ways be safe, and straight
For me the steepest; with your eyes and heart
Will I take count of life and death, and think
No thought against your counsel; yea, by heaven,
I had rather follow and trust my friend, and die,
Than halt and hark mistrustfully behind
To live of him mistrusted.

Babington. Why, well said:
Strike hands upon it; I think you shall not find
A trustless pilot of me. Keep we fast,
And hold you fast my counsel, we shall see
The state high-builded here of heretic hope
Shaken to dust and death. Here comes more proof
To warrant me no liar. — You are welcome, sirs;
Enter BALLARD, *disguised, and* SAVAGE.
Good father captain, come you plumed or cowled,
Or stoled or sworded, here at any hand
The true heart bids you welcome.
Ballard. Sir, at none
Is folly welcome to mine ears or eyes.
Nay, stare not on me stormily: I say,
I bid at no hand welcome, by no name,
Be it ne'er so wise or valiant on men's lips,
Pledge health to folly, nor forecast good hope
For them that serve her, I, but take of men
Things ill done ill at any hand alike.
Ye shall not say I cheered you to your death,
Nor would, though naught more dangerous than your death,
Or deadlier for our cause and God's in ours,
Were here to stand the chance of, and your blood,
Shed vainly with no seed for faith to sow,
Should be not poison for men's hopes to drink.
What is this picture? Have ye sense or souls,
Eyes, ears, or wits to take assurance in
Of how ye stand in strange men's eyes and ears,
How fare upon their talking tongues, how dwell
In shot of their suspicion, and sustain
How great a work how lightly? Think ye not
These men have ears and eyes about your ways,
Walk with your feet, work with your hands, and watch
When ye sleep sound and babble in your sleep?
What knave was he, or whose man sworn and spy,
That drank with you last night? whose hireling lip
Was this that pledged you, Master Babington,
To a foul quean's downfall and a fair queen's rise?
Can ye not seal your tongues from tavern speech,
Nor sup abroad but air may catch it back,
Nor think who set that watch upon your lips
Yourselves can keep not on them?
Babington. What, my friends!
Here is one come to counsel, God be thanked,
That bears commission to rebuke us all.
Why, hark you, sir, you that speak judgment, you
That take our doom upon your double tongue
To sentence and accuse us with one breath,
Our doomsman and our justicer for sin,
Good Captain Ballard, Father Fortescue,
Who made you guardian of us poor men, gave
Your wisdom wardship of our follies, chose
Your faith for keeper of our faiths, that yet
Were never taxed of change or doubted? You,
'Tis you that have an eye to us, and take note
What time we keep, what place, what company,
How far may wisdom trust us to be wise
Or faith esteem us faithful; and yourself
Were once the hireling hand and tongue and eye
That waited on this very Walsingham

To spy men's counsels and betray their blood
Whose trust had sealed you trusty? By God's light,
A goodly guard I have of you, to crave
What man was he I drank with yesternight,
What name, what shape, what habit, as, forsooth,
Were I some statesman's knave and spotted spy,
The man I served, and care dnot how, being dead,
His molten gold should glut my throat in hell,
Might question of me whom I snared last night,
Make inquisition of his face, his gait,
His speech, his likeness. Well, be answered, then:
By God, I know not; but God knows I think
The spy most dangerous on my secret walks,
And witness of my ways most worth my fear,
And deadliest listener to devour my speech,
Now questions me of danger, and the tongue
Most like to sting my trust and life to death
Now taxes mine of rashness.
Ballard. Is he mad?
Or are ye brain-sick all with heat of wine,
That stand and hear him rage like men in storms
Made drunk with danger? Have ye sworn with him
To die the fool's death too of furious fear
And passion scared to slaughter of itself?
Is there none here that knows his cause or me,
Nor what should save or spoil us?
Tichborne. Friend, give ear:
For God's sake, yet be counselled.
Babington. Ay, for God's!
What part hath God in this man's counsels? Nay,
Take you part with him; nay, in God's name go;
What should you do to bide with me? Turn back:
There stands your captain.
Savage. Hath not one man here
One spark in spirit or sprinkling left of shame?
I that looked once for no such fellowship,
But soldiers' hearts in shapes of gentlemen,
I am sick with shame to hear men's jangling tongues
Outnoise their swords unbloodied. Hear me, sirs;
My hand keeps time before my tongue, and hath
But wit to speak in iron; yet as now
Such wit were sharp enough to serve our turn
That keenest tongues may serve not. One thing sworn
Calls on our hearts: the queen must singly die,
Or we, half dead men now with dallying, must
Die several deaths for her brief one, and stretched
Beyond the scope of sufferance; wherefore here
Choose out the man to put this peril on,
And gird him with this glory; let him pass
Straight hence to court, and through all stays of state
Strike death into her heart.
Babington. Why, this rings right;
Well said, and soldierlike; do thus, and take
The vanguard of us all for honor.
Savage. Ay,
Well would I go, but seeing no courtly suit
Like yours, her servants and her pensioners,
The doorkeepers will bid my baseness back
From passage to her presence.
Babington. Oh! for that,
Take this, and buy: nay, start not from your word;
You shall not.

Savage. Sir, I shall not.
Babington. Here's more gold;
Make haste, and God go with you. If the plot
Be blown on once of men's suspicious breath,
We are dead, and all die bootless deaths — be swift —
And her we have served we shall but surely slay.
I will make trial again of Walsingham
If he misdoubt us. Oh! my cloak and sword — [*Knocking within.*
I will go forth myself. What noise is that?
Get you to Gage's lodging; stay not here;
Make speed without for Westminster; perchance
There may we safely shift our shapes and fly,
If the end be come upon us.
Ballard. It is here.
Death knocks at door already. Fly! farewell.
Babington. I would not leave you, but they know you not:
You need not fear, being found here singly.
Ballard. No.
Babington. Nay, halt not, sirs; no word but haste; this way,
Ere they break down the doors. God speed us well!
[*Exeunt all but* BALLARD. *As they go out enter an Officer with Soldiers.*
Officer. Here's one fox yet by the foot: lay hold on him.
Ballard. What would you, sirs?
Officer. Why, make one foul bird fast,
Though the full flight be scattered; for their kind
Must prey not here again, nor here put on
The jay's loose feathers for the raven priest's
To mock the blear-eyed marksman: these plucked off
Shall show the nest that sent this fledgling forth,
Hatched in the hottest holy nook of hell.
Ballard. I am a soldier.
Officer. Ay, the badge we know
Whose broidery signs the shoulders of the file
That Satan marks for Jesus. Bind him fast:
Blue satin and slashed velvet and gold lace,
Methinks we have you, and the hat's band here
So seemly set with silver buttons, all
As here was down in order. By my faith,
A goodly ghostly friend to shrive a maid
As ever kissed for penance: pity 'tis
The hangman's hands must hallow him again
When this lay slough slips off, and twist one rope
For priest to swing with soldier. Bring him hence. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY STUART *and* MARY BEATON.
Mary Stuart. We shall not need keep house for fear to-day:
The skies are fair and hot; the wind sits well
For hound and horn to chime with. I will go.
Mary Beaton How far from this to Tixall?
Mary Stuart. Nine or ten,
Or what miles more, I care not: we shall find
Fair field and goodly quarry, or hill lies,
The gospeller that bade us to the sport
Protesting yesternight the shire had none
To shame Sir Walter Aston's. God be praised,
I take such pleasure yet to back my steed
And bear my crossbow for a deer death well,
I am almost half content — and yet I lie —
To ride no harder nor more dangerous heat,
And hunt no beast of game less gallant

Mary Beaton. Nay,
You grew long since more patient.
Mary Stuart. Ah, God help!
What should I do but learn the word of him
These years and years, the last word learnt but one,
That ever I loved least of all sad words?
The last is death for any soul to learn,
The last save death is patience.
Mary Beaton. Time enough
We have had ere death of life to learn it in
Since you rode last on wilder ways than theirs
That drive the dun deer to his death.
Mary Stuart. Eighteen —
How many more years yet shall God mete out
For thee and me to wait upon their will,
And hope or hope not, watch or sleep, and dream
Awake or sleeping? Surely fewer, I think,
Than half these years that all have less of life
Than one of those more fleet that flew before.
I am yet some ten years younger than this queen,
Some nine or ten; but if I die this year,
And she some score years longer than I think
Be royal-titled, in one year of mine
I shall have lived the longer life, and die
The fuller-fortuned woman. Dost thou mind
The letter that I writ nigh two years gone
To let her wit what privacies of hers
Our trusty dame of Shrewsbury's tongue made mine
Ere it took fire to sting her lord and me?
How thick soe'er o'erscurfed with poisonous lies,
Of her I am sure it lied not; and perchance
I did the wiselier, having writ my fill,
Yet to withhold the letter when she sought
Of me to know what villanies had it poured
In ears of mine against her innocent name:
And yet thou knowest what mirthful heart was mine
To write her word of these, that, had she read,
Had surely, being but woman, made her mad,
Or haply, being not woman, had not. 'Faith,
How say'st thou? did I well?
Mary Beaton. Ay, surely well
To keep that back you did not ill to write.
Mary Stuart. I think so, and again I think not; yet
The best I did was bid thee burn it. She,
That other Bess I mean of Hardwick, hath
Mixed with her gall the fire at heart of hell,
And all the mortal medicines of the world,
To drug her speech with poison; and God wot
Her daughter's child here that I bred and loved,
Bess Pierpoint, my sweet bedfellow that was,
Keeps too much savor of her grandam's stock
For me to match with Nau: my secretary
Shall with no slip of hers ingraft his own,
Begetting shame or peril to us all
From her false blood and fiery tongue. Except
I find a mate as meet to match with him
For truth to me as Gilbert Curle hath found,
I will play Tudor once, and break the banns,
Put on the feature of Elizabeth
To frown their hands in sunder.
Mary Beaton. Were it not
Some tyranny to take her likeness on

And bitter-hearted grudge of matrimony
For one and not his brother secretary,
Forbid your Frenchman's banns for jealousy,
And grace your English with such liberal love
As Barbara fails not yet to find of you
Since she writ Curle for Mowbray? And herein
There shows no touch of Tudor in your mood
More than its wont is; which indeed is naught;
The world, they say, for her should waste, ere man
Should get her virginal goodwill to wed.
Mary Stuart. I would not be so tempered of my blood,
So much mismade as she in spirit and flesh,
To be more fair of fortune. She should hate
Not me — albeit she hate me deadly — more
Than thee or any woman. By my faith,
Fain would I know, what knowing not of her now
I muse upon and marvel, — if she have
Desire or pulse or passion of true heart
Fed full from natural veins, or be indeed
All bare and barren all as dead men's bones
Of all sweet nature and sharp seed of love,
And those salt springs of life, through fire and tears
That bring forth pain and pleasure in their kind
To make good days and evil, all in her
Lie sere and sapless as the dust of death.
I have found no great good hap in all my days,
Nor much good cause to make me glad of God;
Yet have I had and lacked not of my life
My good things and mine evil, being not yet
Barred from life's natural ends of evi
and good
Foredoomed for man and woma
through the world
Till all their works be nothing; and o
mine
I know but this — though I should di
to-day,
I would not take for mine her fortune.
Mary Beaton. No?
Myself perchance I would not.
Mary Stuart. Dost thou think
That fire-tongued witch of Shrewsbur
spake once truth,
Who told me all those quaint, foul
merry tales
Of our dear sister, that at her desire
I writ to give her word of, and at thine
Withheld, and put the letter in thin
hand
To burn, as was thy counsel? For m
part,
How loud she lied soever in the charg
That for adultery taxed me with he
lord,
And, being disproved before the counc
here,
Brought on their knees to give them
selves the lie
Her and her sons by that first lord o
four
That took in turn this hell-mouthe
hag to wife,
And got her kind upon her, — yet i
this
I do believe she lied not more than I
Reporting her by record, how she saic
What infinite times had Leicester an
his queen
Plucked all the fruitless fruit of baffle
love
That being contracted privily the
might;
With what large gust of fierce an
foiled desire
This votaress crowned, whose vo
could no man break,
Since God, whose hand shuts up th
unkindly womb,
Had sealed it on her body, man b
man
Would course her kindless lovers, an
in quest

ursue them hungering as a hound in heat,
ull on the fiery scent and slot of lust,
hat men took shame and laughed and marvelled: one,
er chamberlain, so hotly would she trace,
nd turn perforce from cover, that himself,
eing tracked at sight thus in the general eye,
as even constrained to play the piteous hare,
nd wind and double till her amorous chase
ere blind with speed and breathless; but the worst
as this, that for this country's sake and shame's
ur huntress Dian could not be content
ith Hatton, and another born her man
nd subject of this kingdom, but to heap
e heavier scandal on her countrymen
ad cast the wild growth of her lust away
one base-born, a stranger, whom of nights
ithin her woman's chamber would she seek
kiss and play for shame with secretly;
nd with the duke her bridegroom that should be, —
at should and could not, seeing forsooth no man
ight make her wife or woman, — had she dealt
with this knave his follower; for by night
e met him coming at her chamber door
her bare smock and night-rail, and thereon
de him come in; who there abode three hours.
t fools were they that thought to bind her will,
d stay with one man, or allay the mood
at ranging still gave tongue on several heats
To hunt fresh trails of lusty love. All this,
Thou knowest, on record truly was set down,
With much more villanous else: she prayed me write
That she might know the natural spirit and mind
Toward her of this fell witch whose rancorous mouth
Then bayed my name, as now being great with child
By her fourth husband, in whose charge I lay
As here in Paulet's; so being moved I wrote,
And yet I would she had read it, though not now
Would I re-write each word again, albeit
I might, or thou, were I so minded, or
Thyself so moved to bear such witness. But
'Tis well we know not how she had borne to read
All this and more; what counsel gave the dame,
With loud excess of laughter urging me
To enter on those lists of love-making
My son for suitor to her, who thereby
Might greatly serve and stead me in her sight;
And, I replying that such a thing could be
But held a very mockery, she returns,
The queen was so infatuate and distraught
With high conceit of her fair fretted face
As of a heavenly goddess, that herself
Would take it on her head with no great pains
To bring her to believe it easily;
Being so past reason fain of flattering tongues,
She thought they mocked her not nor lied who said
They might not sometimes look her full in face
For the light glittering from it as the sun;

And so perforce must all her women say,
And she herself that spake, who durst not look
For fear to laugh out each in other's face
Even while they fooled, and fed her vein with words,
Nor let their eyes cross when they spake to her,
And set their feature fast in a frame
To keep grave countenance with gross mockery lined;
And how she prayed me chide her daughter, whom
She might by no means move to take this way,
And for her daughter Talbot was assured
She could not ever choose but laugh outright
Even in the good queen's flattered face. God wot,
Had she read all, and in my hand set down,
I could not blame her though she had sought to take
My head for payment: no less poise on earth
Had served, and hardly, for the writer's fee;
I could not much have blamed her; all the less,
That I did take this, though from slanderous lips,
For gospel and not slander, and that now
I yet do well believe it.

Mary Beaton. And herself
Had well believed so much, and surely seen, —
For all your protest of discredit made
With God to witness that you could not take
Such tales for truth of her, nor would not, — yet
You meant not she should take your word for this,
As well I think she would not.

Mary Stuart. Haply, no.
We do protest not thus to be believed.
And yet the witch in one thing seven years since
Belied her, saying she then must nee
die soon
For timeless fault of nature. No
belike
The soothsaying that speaks short h
span to be
May prove more true of presage.

Mary Beaton. Have you hope
The chase to-day may serve our furth
ends
Than to renew your spirit, and b
time speed?

Mary Stuart. I see not, but I ma
the hour is full
Which I was bidden expect of them
bear
More fruit than grows of promis
Babington
Should tarry now not long; fro
France our friends
Lift up their heads to us-ward, a
await
What comfort may confirm them fr
our part
Who sent us comfort; Ballard's sec
tongue
Has kindled England, striking fr
men's hearts
As from a flint the fire that slept, a
made
Their dark dumb thoughts and d
disfigured hopes
Take form from his and feature, a
and strength,
Speech and desire toward action;
the shires
Wherein the force lies hidden of
faith
Are stirred and set on edge of pres
deed
And hope more imminent now of h
to come
And work to do than ever; not t
time
We hang on trust in succor that co
short
By Philip's fault from Austrian Jo
whose death
Put widow's weeds on mine unwed
hope,
Late trothplight to his enterprise in v
That was to set me free, but might
seal

The faith it pledged, nor on the hand of hope
Make fast the ring that weds desire with deed
And promise with performance; Parma stands
More fast now for us in his uncle's stead,
Albeit the lesser warrior, yet in place
More like to avail us, and in happier time
To do like service; for my cousin of Guise,
His hand and league hold fast our kinsman king,
If not to bend and shape him for our use,
Yet so to govern as he may not thwart
Our forward undertaking till its force
Discharge itself on England: from no side
I see the shade of any fear to fail
As those before so baffled; heart and hand
Our hope is armed with trust more strong than steel,
And spirit to strike more helpful than a sword
In hands that lack the spirit; and here to-day
It may be I shall look this hope in the eyes,
And see her face transfigured. God is good:
He will not fail his faith forever. Oh
That I were now in saddle! Yet an hour,
And I shall be as young again as May
Whose life was come to August; like this year,
I had grown past midway of my life, and sat
Heartsick of summer; but new-mounted now
I shall ride right through shine and shade of spring
With heart and habit of a bride, and bear
My brow more bright than fortune. Truth it is,
Those words of bride and May should on my tongue
Sound now not merry, ring no joy-bells out
In ears of hope or memory; not for me
Have they been joyous words; but this fair day
All sounds that ring delight in fortunate ears,
And words that make men thankful, even to me
Seem thankworthy for joy they have given me not
And hope which now they should not.

Mary Beaton. Nay, who knows?
The less they have given of joy, the more they may;
And they who have had their happiness before
Have hope not in the future; time o'erpast
And time to be have several ends, nor wear
One forward face and backward.

Mary Stuart. God, I pray,
Turn thy good words to gospel, and make truth
Of their kind presage! but our Scots-women
Would say, to be so joyous as I am,
Though I had cause, as surely cause I have,
Were no good warrant of good hope for me.
I never took such comfort of my trust
In Norfolk or Northumberland, nor looked
For such good end as now of all my fears
From all devices past of policy
To join my name with my misnatured son's
In handfast pledge with England's, ere my foes
His counsellors had flawed his craven faith,
And moved my natural blood to cast me off
Who bore him in my body, to come forth
Less childlike than a changeling. But not long
Shall they find means by him to work their will,

Nor he bear head against me; hope was his
To reign forsooth without my fellowship,
And he that with me would not shall not now
Without or with me wield not or divide
Or part or all of empire.

Mary Beaton. Dear my queen,
Vex not your mood with sudden change of thoughts;
Your mind but now was merrier than the sun
Half rid by this through morning: we by noon
Should blithely mount and meet him.

Mary Stuart. So I said.
My spirit is fallen again from that glad strength
Which even but now arrayed it; yet what cause
Should dull the dancing measure in my blood
For doubt or wrath, I know not. Being once forth,
My heart again will quicken.

[*Sings.*

And ye maun braid your yellow hair,
And busk ye like a bride;
Wi' sevenscore men to bring ye hame,
And ae true love beside;
Between the birk and the green rowan
Fu' blithely shall ye ride.

O ye maun braid my yellow hair,
But braid it like nae bride;
And I maun gang my ways, mither,
Wi' nae true love beside;
Between the kirk and the kirkyard
Fu' sadly shall I ride.

How long since,
How long since was it last I heard or sang
Such light lost ends of old faint rhyme worn thin
With use of country songsters? When we twain
Were maidens but some twice a span's length high,
Thou hadst the happier memory to hold rhyme,
But not for songs the merrier.

Mary Beaton. This was one
That I would sing after my nurse, I think,
And weep upon in France at six years old
To think of Scotland.

Mary Stuart. Would I weep for that,
Woman or child, I have had now years enough
To weep in; thou wast never French in heart,
Serving the queen of France. Poor queen that was,
Poor boy that played her bridegroom! now they seem
In these mine eyes that were her eyes as far
Beyond the reach and range of old-world time
As their first fathers' graves.

Enter SIR AMYAS PAULET.

Paulet. Madam, if now
It please you to set forth, the hour is full,
And there your horses ready.

Mary Stuart. Sir, my thanks.
We are bounden to you and this goodly day
For no small comfort. Is it your will we ride
Accompanied with any for the nonce
Of our own household?

Paulet. If you will, to-day
Your secretaries have leave to ride with you.

Mary Stuart. We keep some state, then, yet. I pray you, sir,
Doth he wait on you that came here last month,—
A low-built, lank-cheeked, Judas-bearded man,
Lean, supple, grave, pock-pitten, yellow-polled,
A smiling fellow with a downcast eye?

Paulet. Madam, I know the man for none of mine.

Mary Stuart. I give you joy as you should give God thanks,
Sir, if I err not; but meseemed this man
Found gracious entertainment here, and took

ıch counsel with you as I surely thought
›ake him your friend, and honorable. But now,
I misread not an ambiguous word,
seems you know no more of him or less
ıan Peter did, being questioned, of his Lord.
Paulet. I know not where the cause were to be sought
ıat might for likeness or unlikeness found
ake seemly way for such comparison
s turns such names to jest and bitterness:
owbeit, as I denied not nor disclaimed
› know the man you speak of, yet I may
ith very purity of truth profess
ıe man to be not of my following.
Mary Stuart. See
ow lightly may the tongue that thinks no ill
trip or slip, discoursing that or this
ith grave good men in purity and truth,
ıd come to shame even with a word! God wot,
e had need put bit and bridle in our lips
e they take on them of their foolishness
› change wise words with wisdom. — Come, sweet friend,
t us go seek our kind with horse and hound
› keep us witless company; belike,
ıere shall we find our fellows.
Exeunt MARY STUART *and* MARY BEATON.
Paulet. Would to God
ıis day had done its office! mine till then
›lds me the verier prisoner.
Enter PHILLIPPS.
Phillipps. She will go?
Paulet. Gladly, poor sinful fool, — more gladly, sir,
ıan I go with her.
Phillipps. Yet you go not far:
She is come too near her end of wayfaring
To tire much more men's feet that follow.
Paulet. Ay.
She walks but half blind yet to the end. Even now
She spake of you, and questioned doubtfully
What here you came to do, or held what place
Or commerce with me: when you caught her eye,
It seems your courtesy by some graceless chance
Found but scant grace with her.
Phillipps. 'Tis mine own blame,
Or fault of mine own feature; yet forsooth
I greatly covet not their gracious hap
Who have found or find most grace with her. I pray,
Doth Wade go with you?
Paulet. Nay, — what! know you not? —
But with Sir Thomas Gorges, from the court,
To drive this deer at Tixall.
Phillipps. Two years since,
He went, I think, commissioned from the queen
To treat with her at Sheffield?
Paulet. Ay, and since
She hath not seen him; who being known of here
Had haply given her swift suspicion edge,
Or cause at least of wonder.
Phillipps. And I doubt
His last year's entertainment oversea
As our queen's envoy to demand of France
Her traitor Morgan's body, whence he brought
Naught save dry blows back from the Duke d'Aumale,
And for that prisoner's quarters here to hang
His own not whole but beaten, should not much
Incline him to more good regard of her
For whose love's sake her friends have dealt with him

So honorably; nor she that knows of this
Be the less like to take his presence here
For no good presage to her: you have both done well
To keep his hand as close herein as mine.
Paulet. Sir, by my faith I know not, for myself,
What part is for mine honor, or wherein
Of all this action laid upon mine hand
The name and witness of a gentleman
May gain desert or credit, and increase
In seed and harvest of good men's esteem
For heritage to his heirs, that men unborn
Whose fame is as their name derived from his
May reap in reputation; and indeed
I look for none advancement in the world
Further than this that yet for no man's sake
Would I forego, to keep the name I have
And honor, which no son of mine shall say
I have left him not for any deed of mine
As perfect as my sire bequeathed it me:
I say, for any word or work yet past
No tongue can thus far tax me of decline
From that fair forthright way of gentleman,
Nor shall for any that I think to do
Or aught I think to say alive: howbeit,
I were much bounden to the man would say
But so much for me in our mistress' ear,
The treasurer's, or your master Walsingham's,
Whose office here I have undergone thus long,
And had I leave more gladly would put off
Than ever I put on me; being not one
That out of love toward England even or God
At mightiest men's desire would lightly be
For loyalty disloyal, or approved
In trustless works a trusty traitor; t
He that should tell them of me, to p
cure
The speedier end here of this wo
imposed,
Should bind me to him more heart
than thanks
Might answer.
Phillips. Good Sir Amyas, you an
Hold no such office in this dangero
time
As men make love to for their o
name's sake
Or personal lust of honor; but herei
I pray you yet take note, and pard
me
If I for the instance mix your name w
mine,
That no man's private honor lies
gage,
Nor is the stake set here to play
less
Than what is more than all me
names alive, —
The great life's gage of England;
whose name
Lie all our own impledged, as all
lives
For her redemption forfeit, if the ca
Call once upon us. Not this gift
this,
Or what best likes us, or were gladli
given,
Or might most honorably be part
with
For our more credit on her best
half,
Doth she we serve, this land that ma
us men,
Require of all her children; t
demands
Of our great duty toward her full dese
Even all we have of honor or of life,
Of breath or fame, to give her. W
were I,
Or what were you, being mean or no
born,
Yet moulded both of one land's natu
womb
And fashioned out of England, to de
What gift she crave soever, choose a
grudge

What grace we list to give or what withhold,
efuse and reckon with her when she bids
ield up, forsooth, not life but fame to come,
good man's praise or gentleman's repute,
r lineal pride of children, and the light
f loyalty remembered? which of these
Vere worth our mother's death, or shame that might
all for one hour on England? She must live,
nd keep in all men's sight her honor fast,
hough all we die dishonored; and myself
now not nor seek of men's report to know
what I do to serve her till I die
e honorable or shameful, and its end
ood in men's eyes or evil; but for God,
find not why the name or fear of him
erein should make me swerve or start aside
hrough faint heart's falsehood, as a broken bow
napped in his hand that bent it, ere the shaft
nd out his enemies' heart, and I that end
Vhereto I am sped for service even of him
ho put this office on us.
Paulet. Truly, sir,
lack the wordy wit to match with yours,
ho speak no more than soldier; this I know, —
am sick in spirit and heart to have in hand
ich work or such device of yours as yet
or fear and conscience of what worst may come
lare not well bear through.
Phillipps. Why, so last month
ou writ my master word, and me to boot,
I had set you down a course for many things
You durst not put in execution, nor
Consign the packet to this lady's hand
That was returned from mine, seeing all was well,
And you should hold yourself most wretched man
If by your mean or order there should spring
Suspicion 'twixt the several messengers
Whose hands unwitting each of other ply
The same close trade for the same golden end,
While either holds his mate a faithful fool,
And all their souls, base-born or gently bred,
Are coined and stamped and minted for our use
And current in our service: I thereon,
To assuage your doubt and fortify your fear,
Was posted hither, where by craft and pains
The web is wound up of our enterprise,
And in our hands we hold her very heart
As fast as all this while we held impawned
The faith of Barnes that stood for Gifford here
To take what letters for his mistress came
From southward through the ambassador of France,
And bear them to the brewer, your honest man,
Who wist no further of his fellowship
Than he of Gifford's, being as simple knaves
As knavish each in his simplicity,
And either serviceable alike, to shift
Between my master's hands and yours and mine
Her letters writ and answered to and fro;
And all these faiths as weather-tight and safe
As was the box that held those letters close

At bottom of the barrel, to give up
The charge there sealed and ciphered, and receive
A charge as great in peril and in price
To yield again, when they drew off the beer
That weekly served this lady's household whom
We have drained as dry of secrets drugged with death
As ever they this vessel, and return
To her own lips the dregs she brewed or we
For her to drink have tempered. What of this
Should seem so strange now to you, or distaste
So much the daintier palate of your thoughts,
That I should need reiterate you by word
The work of us o'erpast, or fill your ear
With long foregone recital, that at last
Your soul may start not, or your sense recoil,
To know what end we are come to, or what hope
We took in hand to cut this peril off
By what close mean soe'er and what foul hands
Unwashed of treason, which it yet mislikes
Your knightly palm to touch or close with, seeing
The grime of gold is baser than of blood
That barks their filthy fingers? yet with these
Must you cross hands and grapple, or let fall
The trust you took to treasure.
Paulet. Sir, I will,
Even till the queen take back that gave it; yet
Will not join hands with these, nor take on mine
The taint of their contagion; knowing no cause
That should confound or couple my good name
With theirs more hateful than the reek of hell.

You had these knaveries and thes knaves in charge,
Not I that knew not how to hand them,
Nor whom to choose for chief of tre sons, him
That in mine ignorant eye, unused t read
The shameful scripture of such face bare
Graved on his smooth and simp cheek and brow
No token of a traitor; yet this boy,
This milk-mouthed weanling with h maiden chin,
This soft-lipped knave, late suckled on blood
And nursed of poisonous nipples, hav you not
Found false or feared by this, who first you found
A trustier thief and worthier of h wage
Than I, poor man, had wit to fi him? I,
That trust no changelings of the churc of hell,
No babes reared priestlike at the pa of Rome,
Who have left the old harlot's dead dugs drawn dry,
I lacked the craft to rate this knave price,
Your smock-faced Gifford, at his wor aright,
Which now comes short of promise.
Phillipps. Oh, not he!
Let not your knighthood for a slippe word
So much misdoubt his knaveship: he from France,
On hint of our suspicion in his ear
Half-jestingly recorded, that his hand
Were set against us in one politic tra
With his old yokefellows in craft a creed,
Betraying not them to us but ourselv to them,
My Gilbert writes me with such he of hand,
Such piteous protestation of his faith
So stuffed and swoln with burly-belli oaths, —

And God and Christ confound him if he lie,
And Jesus save him as he speaks mere truth, —
My gracious godly priestling, that yourself
Must sure be moved to take his truth on trust,
Or stand for him approved an atheist.
Paulet. Well,
That you find stuff of laughter in such gear,
And mirth to make out of the godless mouth
Of such a twice-turned villain, for my part,
I take in token of your certain trust,
And make therewith mine own assurance sure,
To see betimes an end of all such craft
As takes the faith forsworn of loud-tongued liars,
And blasphemies of brothel-breathing knaves,
To build its hope or break its jest upon;
And so commend you to your charge, and take
Mine own on me less gladly; for by this
She should be girt to ride, as the old saw saith,
Out of God's blessing into the warm sun,
And out of the warm sun into the pit
That men have dug before her, as herself
Had dug for England else a deeper grave
To hide our hope forever: yet I would
This day and all that hang on it were done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — BEFORE TIXALL PARK.

MARY STUART, MARY BEATON, PAULET, CURLE, NAU, *and Attendants.*

Mary Stuart. If I should nevermore
Set back steed alive,
But now had ridden hither this fair day
The last road ever I must ride on earth,
Yet would I praise it, saying of all days gone
And all roads ridden in sight of stars and sun
Since first I sprang to saddle, here at last
I had found no joyless end. These ways are smooth,
And all this land's face merry; yet I find
The ways even therefore not so good to ride,
And all the land's face therefore less worth love,
Being smoother for a palfrey's maiden pace
And merrier than our moors for outlook: nay,
I lie to say so; there the wind and sun
Make madder mirth by midsummer, and fill
With broader breadth and lustier length of light
The heartier hours that clothe for even and dawn
Our bosom-belted billowy-blossoming hills
Whose hearts break out in laughter like the sea
For miles of heaving heather. Ye should mock
My banished praise of Scotland; and in faith
I praised it but to prick you on to praise
Of your own goodly land; though field and wood
Be parked and parcelled to the sky's edge out,
And this green Stafford moorland smooth and strait
That we but now rode over, and by ours
Look pale for lack of large live mountain bloom
Wind-buffeted with morning, it should be
Worth praise of men whose lineal honor lives
In keeping here of history. But me seems
I have heard, Sir Amyas, of your liberal west

As of a land more affluent-souled than this,
And fruitful-hearted as the south-wind: here
I find a fair-faced change of temperate clime
From that bald hill-brow in a broad bare plain
Where winter laid us both his prisoners late
Fast by the feet at Tutbury; but men say
Your birthright in this land is fallen more fair
In goodlier ground of heritage: perchance,
Grief to be now barred thence by mean of me,
Who less than you can help it or myself,
Makes you ride sad and sullen.
Paulet. Madam, no:
I pray you lay not to my wilful charge
The blame or burden of discourtesy
That but the time should bear which lays on me
This weight of thoughts untimely.
Mary Stuart. Nay, fair sir,
If I, that have no cause in life to seem
Glad of my sad life more than prisoners may,
Take comfort yet of sunshine, he methinks
That holds in ward my days and nights might well
Take no less pleasure of this broad blithe air
Than his poor charge that too much troubles him.
What! are we nigh the chase?
Paulet. Even hard at hand.
Mary Stuart. Can I not see between the glittering leaves
Gleam the dun hides and flash the startled horns
That we must charge and scatter? Were I queen,
And had a crown to wager on my hand,
Sir, I would set it on the chance today
To shoot a flight beyond you.
Paulet. Verily,
The hazard were too heavy for my skill:
I would not hold your wager.
Mary Stuart. No! and why?
Paulet. For fear to come a bowsho
short of you
On the left hand, unluckily.
Mary Stuart. My friend,
Our keeper's wit-shaft is too keen fo
ours
To match its edge with pointless iron
Sir,
Your tongue shoots farther than m
hand or eye
With sense or aim can follow. — Gil
bert Curle,
Your heart yet halts behind this cr
of hounds,
Hunting your own deer's trail at home
who lies
Now close in covert till her bearing
time
Be full to bring forth kindly fruit o
kind
To love that yet lacks issue; and i
sooth
I blame you not to bid all sport go b
For one white doe's sake travailing
who myself
Think long till I may take within min
arm
The soft fawn suckling that is yeane
not yet,
But is to make her mother. We mus
hold
A goodly christening feast with prisor
er's cheer
And mirth enow for such a tender thin
As will not weep more to be born i
bonds
Than babes born out of gaoler's ward
nor grudge
To find no friend more fortunate than
Nor happier hand to welcome it, no
name
More prosperous than poor mine t
wear, if God
Shall send the new-made mother
breast, for love
Of us that love his mother's maide
hood,
A maid to be my name-child, and i
all
Save love to them that love her, b
God's grace,

Most unlike me; for whose unborn sweet sake
Pray you meantime be merry. — 'Faith, methinks
Here be more huntsmen out afield to-day,
And merrier than my guardian. Sir, look up:
What think you of these riders? — All my friends,
Make on to meet them.
Paulet. There shall need no haste:
They ride not slack or lamely.
Mary Stuart. Now, fair sir,
What say you to my chance on wager? Here
I think to outshoot your archery. — By my life,
That too must fail if hope now fail me; these
That ride so far off yet, being come, shall bring
Death or deliverance. Prithee, speak but once;
[*Aside to* MARY BEATON.
Say, these are they we looked for; say, thou too
Hadst hope to meet them; say, they should be here,
And I did well to look for them; O God!
Say but I was not mad to hope; see there;
Speak, or I die.
Mary Beaton. Nay, not before they come.
Mary Stuart. Dost thou not hear my heart? It speaks so loud,
I can hear nothing of them. Yet I will not
Fail in mine enemy's sight. This is mine hour
That was to be for triumph; God, I pray,
Stretch not its length out longer!
Mary Beaton. It is past.
Enter SIR THOMAS GORGES, SIR WILLIAM WADE, *and Soldiers.*
Mary Stuart. What man is this that stands across our way?
Gorges. One that hath warrant, madam, from the queen
To arrest your French and English secretary,
And for more surety see yourself removed
To present ward at Tixall here hard by,
As in this paper stands of her subscribed. —
Lay hands on them.
Mary Stuart. Was this your riddle's word? [*To* PAULET.
You have shot beyond me indeed, and shot to death
Your honor with my life. — Draw, sirs, and stand:
Ye have swords yet left to strike with once, and die
By these our foes are girt with. Some good friend, —
I should have one yet left of you, — take heart,
And slay me here. For God's love, draw: they have not
So large a vantage of us, we must needs
Bear back one foot from peril. Give not way:
Ye shall but die more shamefully than here,
Who can but here die fighting. What! no man?
Must I find never at my need alive
A man with heart to help me? O my God,
Let me die now, and foil them! — Paulet, you,
Most knightly liar and traitor, was not this
Part of your charge, to play my hangman too,
Who have played so well my doomsman, and betrayed
So honorably my trust, so bravely set
A snare so loyal to make sure for death
So poor a foolish woman? Sir, or you
That have this gallant office, great as his,
To do the deadliest errand and most vile
That even your mistress ever laid on man,
And sent her basest knave to bear and slay,
You are likewise of her chivalry, and should not
Shrink to fulfil your title; being a knight,

For her dear sake that made you, lose not heart
To strike for her one worthy stroke, that may
Rid me defenceless of the loathed long life
She gapes for like a bloodhound. Nay, I find
A face beside you that should bear for me
Not life inscribed upon it; two years since
I read therein at Sheffield what good will
She bare toward me that sent to treat withal
So mean a man and shameless, by his tongue
To smite mine honor on the face, and turn
My name of queen to servant; by his hand
So let her turn my life's name now to death,
Which I would take more thankfully than shame
To plead and thus prevail not.

Paulet. Madam, no:
With us you may not in such suit prevail,
Nor we by words or wrath of yours be moved
To turn their edge back on you, nor remit
The least part of our office, which deserves
Nor scorn of you nor wonder, whose own act
Has laid it on us; wherefore with less rage
Please you take thought now to submit yourself,
Even for your own more honor, to the effect
Whose cause was of your own device, that here
Bears fruit unlooked for; which being ripe in time
You cannot choose but taste of, nor may we
But do the season's bidding, and the queen's
Who weeps at heart to know it. — Disarm these men;
Take you the prisoners to your present ward,
And hence again to London: here meanwhile
Some week or twain their lady must lie close,
And with a patient or impatient heart
Expect an end and word of judgment: I
Must with Sir William back to Chartley straight,
And there make inquisition ere day close
What secret serpents of what treasons hatched
May in this lady's papers lurk, whence we
Must pluck the fangs forth of them yet unfleshed,
And lay these plots like dead and strangled snakes
Naked before the council.

Mary Stuart. I must go?

Gorges. Madam, no help: I pray your pardon.

Mary Stuart. Ay?
Had I your pardon in this hand to give,
And here in this my vengeance — Words, and words!
God, for thy pity! what vile thing is this
That thou didst make of woman? even in death,
As in the extremest evil of all our lives,
We can but curse or pray, but prate and weep,
And all our wrath is wind that works no wreck,
And all our fire as water. — Noble sirs,
We are servants of your servants, and obey
The beck of your least groom; obsequiously,
We pray you but report of us so much,
Submit us to you. Yet would I take farewell,
May it not displease you, for old service' sake,
Of one my servant here that was, and now
Hath no word for me; yet I blame him not,
Who am past all help of man. — God witness me,

would not chide now, Gilbert, though my tongue
Had strength yet left for chiding, and its edge
Were yet a sword to smite with, or my wrath
A thing that babes might shrink at; only this
Take with you for your poor queen's true last word, —
That if they let me live so long to see
The fair wife's face again from whose soft side,
Now laboring with your child, by violent hands
You are reft perforce for my sake, while I live
Will have charge of her more carefully than of mine own life's keeping, which indeed
I think not long to keep, nor care, God knows,
How soon or how men take it. Nay, good friend,
Weep not: my weeping time is well-nigh past,
And theirs whose eyes have too much wept for me
Should last no longer. — Sirs, I give you thanks
For thus much grace and patience shown of you,
My gentle gaolers, towards a queen unqueened,
Who shall nor get nor crave again of man
What grace may rest in him to give her. Come,
Bring me to bonds again, and her with me
That hath not stood so nigh me all these years
To fall ere life doth from my side, or take
Her way to death without me till I die.

ACT II. — WALSINGHAM.

SCENE I. — WINDSOR CASTLE.

QUEEN ELIZABETH *and* SIR FRANCIS WALSINGHAM.

Elizabeth. What will ye make me? Let the council know
I am yet their loving mistress, but they lay
Too strange a burden on my love who send
As to their servant word what ways to take,
What sentence of my subjects given subscribe,
And in mine own name utter. Bid them wait:
Have I not patience? and was never quick
To teach my tongue the deadly word of death,
Lest one day strange tongues blot my fame with blood:
The red addition of my sister's name
Shall brand not mine.

Walsingham. God grant your mercy shown
Mark not your memory like a martyr's red
With pure imperial heart's-blood of your own
Shed through your own sweet-spirited height of heart
That held your hand from justice!

Elizabeth. I would rather
Stand in God's sight so signed with mine own blood
Than with a sister's — innocent; or indeed
Though guilty — being a sister's — might I choose,
As being a queen I may not surely, — no —
I may not choose, you tell me.

Walsingham. Nay, no man
Hath license of so large election given
As once to choose, being servant called of God,
If he will serve or no, or save the name
And slack the service.

Elizabeth. Yea, but in his Word
I find no word that whets for king-killing
The sword kings bear for justice: yet I doubt,
Being drawn, it may not choose but strike at root —
Being drawn to cut off treason. Walsingham,

You are more a statesman than a gospeller;
Take for your tongue's text now no text of God's,
But what the Devil has put into their lips
Who should have slain me; nay, what by God's grace,
Who bared their purpose to us, through pain or fear
Hath been wrung thence of secrets writ in fire
At bottom of their hearts. Have they confessed?
Walsingham. The twain trapped first in London.
Elizabeth. What, the priest?
Their twice-turned Ballard, ha?
Walsingham. Madam, not he.
Elizabeth. God's blood! ye have spared not him the torment, knaves?
Of all I would not spare him.
Walsingham. Verily, no;
The rack hath spun his life's thread out so fine
There is but left for death to slit in twain
The thickness of a spider's.
Elizabeth. Ay, still dumb?
Walsingham. Dumb for all good the pains can get of him;
Had he drunk dry the chalice of his craft
Brewed in design abhorred of even his friends
With poisonous purpose toward your majesty,
He had kept scarce harder silence.
Elizabeth. Poison? ay—
That should be still the churchman's household sword,
Or saintly staff to bruise crowned heads from far,
And break them with his precious balms that smell
Rank as the jaws of death, or festal fume
When Rome yet reeked with Borgia. But the rest
Had grace enow to grant me for goodwill
Some death more gracious than a rat's? God wot,
I am bounden to them, and will charg
for this
The hangman thank them heartily; the
shall not
Lack daylight means to die by. God
meseems,
Will have me not die darkling like
dog,
Who hath kept my lips from poison
and my heart
From shot of English knave or Spanish
both
Dubbed of the Devil or damned hi
doctors, whom
My riddance from all ills that plagu
man's life
Should have made great in record; an
for wage
Your Ballard hath not better hap to fe
Than Lopez had or Parry. Well, h
lies
As dumb in bonds as those dead dog
in earth,
You say; but of his fellows newly ta'e
There are that keep not silence: wha
say these?
Pour in mine ears the poison of the
plot
Whose fangs have stung the sill
snakes to death.
Walsingham. The first a soldie
Savage, in these wars
That sometimes serving sought a tra
tor's luck
Under the prince Farnese, then of lat
At Rheims was tempted of our traito
there,
Of one in chief, Gifford the seminaris
My smock-faced spy's good uncle,
take off
Or the earl of Leicester or your gr
cious self;
And since his passage hither, to co
firm
His hollow-hearted hardihood, ha
had
Word from this doctor more solicito
yet
Sent by my knave his nephew, who
late
Was in the seminary of so deadly se
Their reader in philosophy, that the
head,

Even Cardinal Allen, holds for just and good
The purpose laid upon his hand; this man
Makes yet more large confession than of this,
Saying from our Gilbert's trusty mouth he had
Assurance that in Italy the Pope
Hath levies raised against us, to set forth
For seeming succor toward the Parmesan,
But in their actual aim bent hither, where
With French and Spaniards in one front of war
They might make in upon us; but from France
No foot shall pass for inroad on our peace
Till — so they phrase it — by these Catholics here
Your majesty be taken, or —
Elizabeth. No more —
But only taken? springed but bird-like? Ha!
They are something tender of our poor personal chance —
Temperately tender: yet I doubt the springe
Had haply maimed me no less deep than life
Its next the heart most mortal. Or — so be it
Slip the springe — what yet may shackle France,
Hang weights upon their purpose who should else
Be great of heart against us? They take time
Till I be taken — or till what signal else
Is favorable?
Walsingham. Till she they serve be brought
Safe out of Paulet's keeping.
Elizabeth. Ay? they know him
So much my servant, and his guard so good,
That sound of strange feet marching on our soil
Against us in his prisoner's name perchance
Might from the walls wherein she sits his guest
Raise a funereal echo? Yet I think
He would not dare — what think'st thou might he dare
Without my word for warrant? If I knew
This —
Walsingham. It should profit not your grace to know
What may not be conceivable for truth
Without some stain on honor.
Elizabeth. Nay, I say not
That I would have him take upon his hand
More than his trust may warrant: yet have men,
Good men, for very truth of their good hearts,
Put loyal hand to work as perilous. Well,
God wot I would not have him so transgress —
If such be called transgressors.
Walsingham. Let the queen
Rest well assured he shall not. So far forth
Our swordsman Savage witnesses of these
That moved him toward your murder but in trust
Thereby to bring invasion over sea:
Which one more gently natured of his birth,
Tichborne, protests with very show of truth
That he would give no ear to, knowing, he saith,
The miseries of such conquest: nor, it seems,
Heard this man aught of murderous purpose bent
Against your highness.
Elizabeth. Naught? why then, again,
To him I am yet more bounden, who may think,
Being found but half my traitor, at my hands
To find but half a hangman.
Walsingham. Nay, the man
Herein seems all but half his own man, being

Made merely out of stranger hearts and brains
Their engine of conspiracy; for thus
Forsooth he pleads, that Babington his friend
First showed him how himself was wrought upon
By one man's counsel and persuasion, one
Held of great judgment, — Ballard, on whose head
All these lay all their forfeit.
Elizabeth. Yet shall each
Pay for himself red coin of ransom down
In costlier drops than gold is. But of these
Why take we thought? Their natural-subject blood
Can wash not out their sanguine-sealed attempt,
Nor leave us marked as tyrant: only she
That is the head and heart of all your fears,
Whose hope or fear is England's, quick or dead,
Leaves or imperilled or impeached of blood
Me, that with all but hazard of mine own,
God knows, would yet redeem her. I will write
With mine own hand to her privily, — what else? —
Saying, if by word as privy from her hand
She will confess her treasonous practices,
They shall be wrapped in silence up, and she
By judgment live unscathed.
Walsingham. Being that she is,
So surely will she deem of your great grace,
And see it but as a snare set wide, or net
Spread in the bird's sight vainly.
Elizabeth. Why, then, well:
She, casting off my grace, from all men's grace
Cuts off herself, and even aloud avows
By silence and suspect of jealous heart
Her manifest foul conscience: on which proof
I will proclaim her to the parliament
So self-convicted. Yet I would not have
Her name and life by mortal evidence
Touched at the trial of them that now shall die,
Or by their charge attainted: lest myself
Fall in more peril of her friends than she
Stands yet in shot of judgment.
Walsingham. Be assured,
Madam, the process of their treasons judged
Shall tax not her before her trial-time
With public note of clear complicity
Even for that danger's sake which moves you.
Elizabeth. Me
So much it moves not for my mere life's sake —
Which I would never buy with fear of death —
As for the general danger's, and the shame's
Thence cast on queenship and on womanhood
By mean of such a murderess. But, for them,
I would the merited manner of their death
Might for more note of terror be referred
To me and to my council: these at least
Shall hang for warning in the world's wide eye
More high than common traitors, with more pains
Being ravished forth of their more villanous lives
Than feed the general throat of justice. Her
Shall this too touch, whom none that serves henceforth
But shall be sure of hire more terrible
Than all past wage of treason.
Walsingham. Why, so far
As law gives leave —
Elizabeth. What prat'st thou me of law?

od's blood! is law for man's sake
made, or man
or law's sake only, to be held in
bonds,
ed lovingly like hound in huntsman's
leash
r child by finger, not for help or stay,
at hurt and hinderance? Is not all
this land
nd all its hope and surety given to
time
sovereignty and freedom, all the
fame
nd all the fruit of manhood hence to
be,
ore than one rag or relic of its law
herewith all these lie shackled? as
too sure
ave states no less than ours been
done to death
ith gentle counsel and soft-handed
rule
or fear to snap one thread of ordi-
nance
ough thence the state were strangled.
Walsingham. Madam, yet
ere need no need be here of law's
least breach,
at of all else is worst necessity —
ing such a mortal medicine to the
state
poison drunk to expel a feverish
taint
hich air or sleep might purge as
easily.
Elizabeth. Ay; but if air be poison-
struck with plague,
sleep to death lie palsied, fools
were they,
int hearts and faithless, who for
health's fair sake
ould fear to cleanse air, pierce and
probe the trance,
th purging fire or iron. Have your
way.
d send good end of all this, and pro-
cure
ne mean whereby mine enemies'
craft and his
y take no feet but theirs in their
own toils,
d no blood shed be innocent as
mine.

SCENE II. — CHARTLEY.

MARY BEATON *and* SIR AMYAS PAULET.

Paulet. You should do well to bid
her less be moved
Who needs fear less of evil. Since we
came
Again from Tixall this wild mood of
hers
Hath vexed her more than all men's
enmities
Should move a heart more constant.
Verily,
I thought she had held more rule upon
herself
Than to call out on beggars at the
gate
When she rode forth, crying she had
naught to give,
Being all as much a beggar too as they,
With all things taken from her.
Mary Beaton. Being so served,
In sooth she should not show nor
shame nor spleen.
It was but seventeen days ye held her
there
Away from all attendance, as in bonds
Kept without change of raiment, and
to find,
Being thence haled hither again, no
nobler use,
But all her papers plundered — then
her keys
By force of violent threat wrung from
the hand
She scarce could stir to help herself
abed:
These were no matters that should
move her.
Paulet. None,
If she be clean of conscience, whole of
heart,
Nor else than pure in purpose, but
maligned
Of men's suspicions: how should one
thus wronged
But hold all hard chance good to
approve her case
Blameless, give praise for all, turn all
to thanks
That might unload her of so sore a
charge,

Despoiled not, but disburdened? Her great wrath
Pleads hard against her, and itself spake loud
Alone, ere other witness might unseal
Wrath's fierce interpretation: which ere long
Was of her secretaries expounded.
Mary Beaton. Sir,
As you are honorable, and of equal heart
Have shown such grace as man being manful may
To such a piteous prisoner as desires
Naught now but what may hurt not loyalty
Though you comply therewith to comfort her,
Let her not think your spirit so far incensed
By wild words of her mistress cast on you
In heat of heart and bitter fire of spleen,
That you should now close ears against a prayer
Which else might fairly find them open.
Paulet. Speak
More short and plainly: what I well may grant
Shall so seem easiest granted.
Mary Beaton. There should be
No cause, I think, to seal your lips up, though
I crave of them but so much breath as may
Give mine ear knowledge of the witness borne
(If aught of witness were against her borne)
By those her secretaries you spake of.
Paulet. This
With hard expostulation was drawn forth
At last of one and other, that they twain
Had writ by record from their lady's mouth
To Babington some letter which implies
Close conscience of his treason, and good-will
To meet his service with complicity:
But one thing found therein of deadliest note
The Frenchman swore they set no
down, nor she
Bade write one word of favor nor assen
Answering this murderous motion to
ward our queen:
Only, saith he, she held herself no
bound
For love's sake to reveal it, and thereb
For love of enemies do to death suc
friends
As only for her own love's sake wer
found
Fit men for murderous treason: an
so much
Her own hand's transcript of the wor
she sent
Should once produced bear witness c
her.
Mary Beaton. Ay?
How then came this withholden?
Paulet. If she speak
But truth, why, truth should sure b
manifest,
And shall, with God's good-will, t
good men's joy
That wish not evil: as at Fotheringa
When she shall come to trial must b
tried
If it be truth or no: for which assay
You shall do toward her well and faith
fully
To bid her presently prepare her soul
That it may there make answer.
Mary Beaton. Presently?
Paulet. Upon the arraignment of he
friends who stand
As 'twere at point of execution now
Ere sentence pass upon them of the
sin.
Would you no more with me?
Mary Beaton. I am bounden to you
For thus much tidings granted.
Paulet. So farewell. [*Ex*
Mary Beaton. So fare I well or ill a
one who knows
He shall not fare much further towar
his end.
Here looms on me the landmark of m
life,
That I have looked for now some sco
of years

Even with long-suffering eagerness of heart
And a most hungry patience. I did know,
Yea, God, thou knowest I knew this all that while,
From that day forth when even these eyes beheld
Fall the most faithful head in all the world,
Toward her most loving, and of me most loved,
By doom of hers that was so loved of him
He could not love me nor his life at all,
Nor his own soul, nor aught that all men love,
Nor could fear death nor very God, or care
If there were aught more merciful in heaven
Than love on earth had been to him. Chastelard,
I have not had the name upon my lips
That stands for sign of love the truest in man
Since first love made him sacrifice of men,
This long sad score of years retributive
Since it was cast out of her heart and mind
Who made it mean a dead thing; nor, I think,
Will she remember it before she die
More than in France the memories of old friends
Are like to have yet forgotten; but for me,
Haply, thou knowest, so death not all be death
If all these years I have had not in my mind
Through all these chances this one thought in all, —
That I shall never leave her till she die.
Nor surely now shall I much longer serve
Who fain would lie down at her foot and sleep,
Fain, fain have done with waking. Yet my soul
Knows, and yet God knows, I would set not hand
To such a work as might put on the time,
And make death's foot more forward for her sake:
Yea, were it to deliver mine own soul
From bondage and long-suffering of my life,
I would not set mine hand to work her wrong.
Tempted I was — but hath God need of me
To work his judgment, bring his time about,
Approve his justice if the word be just,
That whoso doeth shall suffer his own deed,
Bear his own blow, to weep tears back for tears,
And bleed for bloodshed? God should spare me this
That once I held the one good hope on earth, —
To be the mean and engine of her end,
Or some least part at least therein: I prayed,
God, give me so much grace — who now should pray,
Tempt me not, God. My heart swelled once to know
I bore her death about me; as I think
Indeed I bear it: but what need hath God
That I should clinch his doom with craft of mine?
What needs the wrath of hot Elizabeth
Be blown aflame with mere past writing read,
Which hath to enkindle it higher already proof
Of present practice on her state and life?
Shall fear of death or love of England fail,
Or memory faint, or foresight fall stark blind,
That there should need the whet and spur of shame
To turn her spirit into some chafing snake's,
And make its fang more feared for mortal? Yet

I am glad, and I repent me not, to know
I have the writing in my bosom sealed
That bears such matter, with her own hand signed,
As she that yet repents her not to have writ
Repents her not that she refrained to send,
And fears not but long since it felt the fire —
Being fire itself to burn her, yet unquenched,
But in my hand here covered harmless up
Which had in charge to burn it. What perchance
Might then the reading of it have wrought for us,
If all this fiery poison of her scoffs
Making the foul froth of a serpent's tongue
More venomous, and more deadly toward her queen,
Even Bess of Hardwick's bitterest babbling tales,
Had touched at heart the Tudor vein indeed?
Enough it yet were surely, though that vein
Were now the gentlest that such hearts may hold,
And all doubt's trembling balance that way bent,
To turn, as with one mortal grain cast in,
The scale of grace against her life that writ,
And weigh down pity deathward.

Enter MARY STUART.

Mary Stuart. Have we found
Such kindness of our keeper as may give
Some ease from expectation? or must hope
Still fret for ignorance how long here we stay
As men abiding judgment?

Mary Beaton. Now not long,
He tells me, need we think to tarry; since
The time and place of trial are set, next month
To hold it in the castle of Fotheringay.

Mary Stuart. Why, he knows well
I were full easily moved
To set forth hence; there must I find more scope
To commune with the ambassador of France
By letter thence to London: but, God help,
Think these folk truly, doth she verily think,
What never man durst yet, nor woman dreamed,
May one that is nor man nor woman think,
To bring a queen born subject of no laws
Here in subjection of an alien law
By foreign force of judgment? Were she wise,
Might she not have me privily made away?
And being nor wise, nor valiant but of tongue,
Could she find yet foolhardiness of heart
Enough to attaint the rule of royal rights
With murderous madness? I will think not this
Till it be proven indeed.

Mary Beaton. A month come round
This man protests, will prove it.

Mary Stuart. Ay! protests?
What protestation of what Protestant
Can unmake law that was of God's mouth made,
Unwrite the writing of the world, unsay
The general saying of ages? If I go,
Compelled of God's hand or constrained of man's,
Yet God shall bid me not nor man enforce
My tongue to plead before them for my life.
I had rather end as kings before me die
Rather by shot or stroke of murderous hands,
Than so make answer once in face of man
As one brought forth to judgment. Are they mad,
And she most mad for envious heart of all,

To make so mean account of me? Methought,
When late we came back hither, soiled and spent
And sick with travel, I had seen their worst of wrong
Full-faced, with its most outrage: when I found
My servant Curle's young new-delivered wife
Without priest's comfort, and her babe unblessed,
A nameless piteous thing born ere its time,
And took it from the mother's arms abed,
And bade her have good comfort, since myself
Would take all charge against her husband laid
On mine own head to answer, — deeming not
Man ever durst bid answer for myself
On charge as mortal, — and, mine almoner gone,
Did I not crave of Paulet for a grace
His chaplain might baptize me this poor babe,
And was denied it, and with mine own hands
For shame and charity moved to christen her
There with scant ritual, in his heretic sight,
By mine own woful name, whence God, I pray,
For her take off its presage? I misdeemed,
Who deemed all these and yet far more than these
For one born queen indignities enough,
On one crowned head enough of buffets. more
Hath time's hand laid upon me; yet I keep
Faith in one word I spake to Paulet, saying
Two things were mine though I stood spoiled of all
Is of my letters and my privy coin
By pickpurse hands of office: these things yet
Might none take thievish hold upon to strip
His prisoner naked of her natural dower, —
The blood yet royal running here unspilled,
And that religion which I think to keep
Fast as this royal blood until I die.
So, where at last and howsoe'er I fare,
I need not much take thought, nor thou for love
Take of thy mistress pity: yet meseems
They dare not work their open will on me;
But God's it is that shall be done, and I
Find end of all in quiet. I would sleep
On this strange news of thine, that being awake
I may the freshlier front my sense thereof
And thought of life or death. Come in with me.

Scene III. — Tyburn.

A Crowd of Citizens.

First Citizen. Is not their hour yet on? Men say the queen
Bade spare no jot of torment in their end
That law might lay upon them.

Second Citizen. Truth it is,
To spare what scourge soe'er man's justice may
Twist for such caitiff traitors, were to grieve
God's with mere inobservance. Hear you not
How yet the loud lewd braggarts of their side
Keep heart to threaten that for all this foil
They are not foiled indeed, but yet the work
Shall prosper with deliverance of their queen,
And death for her of ours, though they should give
Of their own lives for one an hundredfold?

Third Citizen. These are bold mouths: one that shall die today,

Being this last week arraigned at Westminster,
Had no such heart, they say, to his defence,
Who was the main head of their treasons.
First Citizen. Ay,
And yesterday, if truth belie not him,
Durst with his doomed hand write some word of prayer
To the queen's self, her very grace, to crave
Grace of her for his gracelessness, that she
Might work, on one too tainted to deserve,
A miracle of compassion, whence her fame
For pity of sins too great for pity of man
Might shine more glorious than his crime showed foul
In the eye of such a mercy.
Second Citizen. Yet men said
He spake at his arraignment soberly
With clear mild looks and gracious gesture, showing
The purport of his treasons in such wise
That it seemed pity of him to hear them, how
All their beginnings and proceedings had
First head and fountain only for their spring
From ill persuasions of that poisonous priest
Who stood the guiltiest near, by this man's side
Approved a valiant villain. Barnwell next,
Who came but late from Ireland here to court,
Made simply protestation of design
To work no personal ill against the queen,
Nor paint rebellion's face as murder's red
With blood imperial: Tichborne then avowed
He knew the secret of their aim, and kept,
And held forsooth himself no traitor yet
In the end would even plead guilty Donne with him,
And Salisbury, who not less professe he still
Stood out against the killing of th queen,
And would not hurt her for a kingdom So,
When thus all these had pleaded, on by one
Was each man bid say fairly, for hi part,
Why sentence should not pass: and Ba lard first,
Who had been so sorely racked h might not stand,
Spake, but as seems to none effect; whom
Said Babington again, he set the on,
He first, and most of all him, who b lieved
This priest had power to assoil his so alive
Of all else mortal treason. Ballar then,
As in sad scorn — *Yea, Master Babington,*
Quoth he, *lay all upon me, but I wish*
For you the shedding of my blood mig be
The saving of your life: howbeit, that,
Say what you will; and I will say more.
Nor spake the swordsman Savage aug again,
Who, first arraigned, had first avowe his cause
Guilty; nor yet spake Tichborne augh but Donne
Spake, and the same said Barnwell, each had sinned
For very conscience only; Salisbu last
Besought the queen remission of h guilt.
Then spake Sir Christopher Hatton f the rest
That sat with him commissioners, a showed

How by dark doctrine of the seminaries,
And instance most of Ballard, had been brought
To extreme destruction here of body and soul
A sort of brave youths otherwise endowed
With goodly gifts of birthright; and in fine
There was the sentence given that here even now
Shows seven for dead men in our present sight,
And shall bring six to-morrow forth to die.

Enter BABINGTON, BALLARD (*carried in a chair*), TICHBORNE, SAVAGE, BARNWELL, TILNEY, *and* ABINGTON, *guarded: Sheriff, Executioner, Chaplain, etc.*

First Citizen. What, will they speak?

Second Citizen. Ay; each hath leave in turn
To show what mood he dies in toward his cause.

Ballard. Sirs, ye that stand to see us take our doom,
being here given this grace to speak to you
Have but my word to witness for my soul,
That all I have done and all designed to do
Was only for advancement of true faith
To furtherance of religion: for myself
Ought would I never, but for Christ's dear church
Was mine intent all wholly, to redeem
Her sore affliction in this age and land,
As now may not be yet: which knowing for truth,
I am readier even at heart to die than live.
And dying I crave of all men pardon whom
My doings at all have touched, or who thereat
Take scandal; and forgiveness of the queen
If on this cause I have offended her.

Savage. The like say I, that have no skill in speech,
But heart enough with faith at heart to die,
Seeing but for conscience and the common good,
And no preferment but this general weal,
I did attempt this business.

Barnwell. I confess
That I, whose seed was of that hallowed earth
Whereof each pore hath sweated blood for Christ,
Had note of these men's drifts, which I deny
That ever I consented with, or could
In conscience hold for lawful. That I came
To spy for them occasions in the court,
And there being noted of her Majesty
She seeing mine eyes peer sharply like a man's
That had such purpose as she wist before
Prayed God that all were well — if this were urged,
I might make answer, it was not unknown
To divers of the council that I there
Had matters to solicit of mine own
Which thither drew me then: yet I confess
That Babington, espying me thence returned,
Asked me what news: to whom again I told,
Her majesty had been abroad that day,
With all the circumstance I saw there. Now,
If I have done her majesty offence,
I crave her pardon: and assuredly
If this my body's sacrifice might yet
Establish her in true religion, here
Most willingly should this be offered up.

Tilney. I came not here to reason of my faith,
But to die simply like a Catholic, praying
Christ give our queen Elizabeth long life,
And warning all youth born take heed by me.

Abington. I likewise, and if aught I have erred in aught
I crave but pardon as for ignorant sin,
Holding at all points firm the Catholic faith;
And all things charged against me I confess,
Save that I ever sought her highness' death:
In whose poor kingdom yet ere long, I fear,
Will be great bloodshed.
Sheriff. Seest thou, Abington,
Here all these people present of thy kind
Whose blood shall be demanded at thy hands
If dying thou hide what might endanger them?
Speak therefore, why or by what mortal mean
Should there be shed such blood?
Abington. All that I know
You have on record: take but this for sure, —
This country lives for its iniquity
Loathed of all countries, and God loves it not.
Whereon I pray you trouble me no more
With questions of this world, but let me pray,
And in mine own wise make my peace with God.
Babington. For me, first head of all this enterprise,
I needs must make this record of myself,
I have not conspired for profit, but in trust
Of men's persuasions whence I stood assured
This work was lawful which I should have done,
And meritorious as toward God; for which
No less I crave forgiveness of my queen,
And that my brother may possess my lands
In heritage else forfeit with my head.
Tichborne. Good countrymen and my dear friends, you look
For something to be said of me, that am
But an ill orator; and my text is worse.
Vain were it to make full discourse of all
This cause that brings me hither, which before
Was all made bare, and is well known to most
That have their eyes upon me: let me stand
For all young men, and most for those born high,
Their present warning here: a friend I had,
Ay, and a dear friend, one of whom I made
No small account, whose friendship for pure love
To this hath brought me: I may not deny
He told me all the matter, how set down,
And ready to be wrought; which always I
Held impious, and denied to deal therein:
But only for my friend's regard was I
Silent, and verified a saying in me,
Who so consented to him. Ere this thing chanced,
How brotherly we twain lived heart in heart
Together, in what flourishing estate,
This town well knows: of whom went all report
Through her loud length of Fleet-street and the Strand
And all parts else that sound men's fortunate names,
But Babington and Tichborne? that therein
There was no haughtiest threshold found of force
To brave our entry; thus we lived our life,
And wanted nothing we might wish for then,
For me, what less was in my head, God knows,
Than high state matters? Give me now but leave
Scarce to declare the miseries I sustained

Since I took knowledge of this action, whence
To his estate I well may liken mine,
Who could forbear not one forbidden thing
To enjoy all else afforded of the world:
The terror of my conscience hung on me;
Who, taking heed what perils girt me, went
To Sir John Peters hence in Essex, there
Appointing that my horses by his mean
Should meet me here in London, whence I thought
To flee into the country: but being here
I heard how all was now bewrayed abroad;
Whence Adam-like we fled into the woods,
And there were taken. My dear countrymen,
Albeit my sorrows well may be your joy,
Yet mix your smiles with tears: pity my case,
Who, born out of an house whose name descends
Even from two hundred years ere English earth
Felt Norman heel upon her, wore it yet
Till this mishap of mine unspotted. Sirs,
I have a wife, and one sweet child: my wife,
My dear wife Agnes: and my grief is there;
And for six sisters too left on my hand:
All my poor servants were dispersed, I know,
Upon their master's capture: all which things
Most heartily I sorrow for: and though
Naught might I less have merited at her hands,
Yet had I looked for pardon of my fault
From the queen's absolute grace and clemency;
That the unexpired remainder of my years
Might in some sort have haply recompensed
This former guilt of mine whereof I die:
But seeing such fault may find not such release
Even of her utter mercies, heartily
I crave at least of her and all the world
Forgiveness, and to God commend my soul,
And to men's memory this my penitence
Till our death's record die from out the land.

First Citizen. God pardon him! Stand back: what ail these knaves
To drive and thrust upon us? Help me, sir;
I thank you: hence we take them full in view:
Hath yet the hangman there his knife in hand?

ACT III. — BURGHLEY.

SCENE I. — *The presence-chamber in Fotheringay Castle. At the upper end, a chair of state as for* QUEEN ELIZABETH; *opposite, in the centre of the hall, a chair for* MARY STUART. *The Commissioners seated on either side along the wall: to the right, the Earls, with* LORD CHANCELLOR BROMLEY *and* LORD TREASURER BURGHLEY; *to the left, the Barons, with the Knights of the Privy Council, among them* WALSINGHAM *and* PAULET; POPHAM, EGERTON, *and* GAWDY, *as Counsel for the Crown. Enter* MARY STUART, *supported by* SIR ANDREW MELVILLE, *and takes her place.*

Mary Stuart. Here are full many men of counsel met;
Not one for me.

[*The Chancellor rises.*

Bromley. Madam, this court is held
To make strait inquisition as by law
Of what with grief of heart our queen has heard, —
A plot upon her life, against the faith
Here in her kingdom stablished: on which cause

Our charge it is to exact your answer here,
And put to proof your guilt or innocence.
Mary Stuart (*rising*). Sirs, whom by strange constraint I stand before,
My lords, and not my judges, — since no law
Can hold to mortal judgment answerable
A princess free-born of all courts on earth, —
I rise not here to make response as one
Responsible toward any for my life,
Or of mine acts accountable to man,
Who see none higher save only God in heaven.
I am no natural subject of your land,
That I should here plead as a criminal charged,
Nor in such wise appear I now: I came
On your queen's faith to seek in England help
By trothplight pledged me: where by promise-breach
I am even since then her prisoner held in ward:
Yet, understanding by report of you
Some certain things I know not of to be
Against me brought on record, by my will
I stand content to hear and answer these.
Bromley. Madam, there lives none born on earth so high
Who for this land's laws' breach within this land
Shall not stand answerable before those laws.
Burghley. Let there be record of the prisoner's plea
And answer given such protest here set down,
And so proceed we to this present charge.
Gawdy. My lords, to unfold by length of circumstance
The model of this whole conspiracy
Should lay the pattern of all treasons bare
That ever brought high state in danger. This
No man there lives among us but hath heard, —
How certain men of our queen's household folk,
Being wrought on by persuasion of their priests,
Drew late a bond between them, binding these
With others of their faith accomplices
Directed first of Anthony Babington
By mean of six for execution chosen
To slay the queen their mistress, and thereon
Make all her trustiest men of trust away;
As, my lord treasurer Burghley present here,
Lord Hunsdon, and Sir Francis Walsingham,
And one that held in charge a while agone
This lady now on trial, — Sir Francis Knowles.
That she was hereto privy, to her power
Approving and abetting their device,
It shall not stand us in much need to show,
Whose proofs are manifoldly manifest
On record written of their hands and hers.
Mary Stuart. Of all this I know nothing: Babington
I have used for mine intelligencer, sent
With letters charged at need, but never yet
Spake with him, never writ him word of mine
As privy to these close conspiracies,
Nor word of his had from him. Never came
One harmful thought upon me toward your queen,
Nor knowledge ever that of other hearts
Was harm designed against her
Proofs, ye say,
Forsooth ye hold to impeach me: I desire
But only to behold and handle them
If they in sooth of sense be tangible
More than mere air and shadow.
Burghley. Let the clerk
Produce those letters writ from Babington.

Mary Stuart. What then? It may be such were writ of him:
Be it proved that they came ever in my hands.
If Babington affirm so much, I say
He, or who else will say it, lies openly.
Gawdy. Here is the man's confession writ; and here
Ballard's the Jesuit; and the soldier's here,
Savage, that served with Parma.
Mary Stuart. What of these?
Traitors they were, and traitor-like they lied.
Gawdy. And here the last her letter of response
Confirming and approving in each point
Their purpose, writ direct to Babington.
Mary Stuart. My letter? None of mine it is: perchance
It may be in my cipher charactered,
But never came from or my tongue or hand:
I have sought mine own deliverance, and thereto
Solicited of my friends their natural help:
Yet certain whom I list not name there were,
Whose offers made of help to set me free
Receiving, yet I answered not a word.
Howbeit, desiring to divert the storm
Of persecution from the Church, for this
To your queen's grace I have made most earnest suit:
But for mine own part, I would purchase not
This kingdom with the meanest one man's death
In all its commonalty, much less the queen's.
Many there be have dangerously designed
Things that I knew not: yea, but very late
There came a letter to my hand which craved
My pardon if by enterprise of some
Were undertaken aught unknown of me.
A cipher lightly may one counterfeit,
As he that vaunted him of late in France
To be my son's base brother; and I fear
Lest this, for aught mine ignorance of it knows,
May be that secretary's fair handiwork
Who sits to judge me, and hath practised late,
I hear, against my son's life and mine own.
But I protest I have not so much as thought
Nor dreamed upon destruction of the queen:
I had rather spend most gladly mine own life
Than for my sake the Catholics should be thus
Afflicted only in very hate of me,
And drawn to death so cruel as these tears
Gush newly forth to think of.
Burghley. Here no man
Who hath showed himself true subject to the state
Was ever for religion done to death;
But some for treason, that against the queen
Upheld the pope's bull and authority.
Mary Stuart. Yet have I heard it otherwise affirmed,
And read in books set forth in print as much.
Burghley. They that so write say too the queen hath here
Made forfeit of her royal dignity.
Walsingham. Here I call God to record on my part
That personally or as a private man
I have done naught misbeseeming honesty,
Nor as I bear a public person's place
Done aught thereof unworthy. I confess
That, being right careful of the queen's estate
And safety of this realm, I have curiously
Searched out the practices against it: nay,
Herein had Ballard offered me his help,

I durst not have denied him; yea, I would
Have recompensed the pains he had taken. Say
I have practised aught with him, why did he not,
To save his life, reveal it?
Mary Stuart. Pray you, sir,
Take no displeasure at me: truth it is
Report has found me of your dealings, blown
From lip to ear abroad, wherein myself
I put no credit; and could but desire
Yourself would all as little make account
Of slanders flung on me. Spies, sure, are men
Of doubtful credit, which dissemble things
Far other than they speak. Do not believe
That I gave ever or could give consent
Once to the queen's destruction: I would never,
These tears are bitter witness, never would
Make shipwreck of my soul by compassing
Destruction of my dearest sister.
Gawdy. This
Shall soon by witness be disproved: as here
Even by this letter from Charles Paget's hand
Transcribed, which Curle your secretary hath borne,
Plain witness you received, touching a league
Betwixt Mendoza and Ballard, who conferred
Of this land's fore-ordained invasion, thence
To give you freedom.
Mary Stuart. What of this? ye shoot
Wide of the purpose: this approves not me
Consenting to the queen's destruction.
Gawdy. That stands proven enough by word of Babington,
Who dying avowed it, and by letters passed
From him to you, whom he therein acclaims
As his most dread and sovereign lady and queen,
And by the way makes mention passingly
Of a plot laid by transference to convey
This kingdom to the Spaniard.
Mary Stuart. I confess
There came a priest unto me, saying if I
Would not herein bear part, I with my son
Alike should be debarred the inheritance:
His name ye shall not have of me; but this
Ye know, that openly the Spaniard lays
Claim to your kingdom, and to none will give
Place ever save to me.
Burghley. Still stands the charge,
On written witness of your secretaries,
Great on all points against you.
Mary Stuart. Wherefore then
Are not these writers with these writings brought
To outface me front to front? For Gilbert Curle,
He is in the Frenchman's hands a waxen toy,
Whom the other, once mine uncle's secretary,
The Cardinal's of Lorraine, at his mere will
Moulds, turns, and tempers; being himself a knave
That may be hired or scared with peril or coin
To swear what thing men bid him. Truth again
Is this that I deny not, seeing myself
Against all right held fast in English ward,
I have sought all help where I might hope to find;
Which thing that I dispute not, let this be
The sign that I disclaim no jot of truth
In all objected to me. For the rest,
All majesty that moves in all the world,
And all safe station of all princes born,
Fall, as things unrespected, to the ground,
If on the testimony of secretaries

And on their writings merely these depend,
Being to their likeness thence debased. For me,
Naught I delivered to them but what first
Nature to me delivered, that I might
Recover yet at length my liberty.
I am not to be convicted save alone
By mine own word or writing. If these men
Have written toward the queen my sister's hurt
Aught, I wist naught of all such writ at all:
Let them be put to punishment; I am sure,
Were these here present, they by testimony
Would clear me clear of blame.
Gawdy. Yet by their mean
They could not in excuse of you deny
That letters of communion to and fro
Have passed between you and the Spaniard, whence
What should have come on England and the queen
These both well know, and with what messages
Were English exiles entertained of you
By mean of these men, of your secretaries,
Confirmed and cherished in conspiracy
For this her kingdom's overthrow: in France
Paget and Morgan, traitors in design
Of one close mind with you, and in your name
Cheered hence for constant service.
Mary Stuart. That I sought
Comfort and furtherance of all Catholic states,
By what mean found soever just and good,
Your mistress from myself had note long since
And open warning: uncompelled I made
Avowal of such my righteous purpose, nor
In aught may disavow it. Of these late plots
No proof is here to attaint mine innocence,
Who dare all proof against me: Babington
I know not of, nor Ballard, nor their works;
But kings my kinsmen, powers that serve the Church,
These I confess my comforters, in hope
Held fast of their alliance. Yet again
I challenge in the witness of my words
The notes writ of these letters here alleged
In mine own hand: if these ye bring not forth,
Judge all good men if I be not condemned
In all your hearts already, who perchance,
For all this pageant held of lawless law,
Have bound yourselves by pledge to speak me dead.
But I would have you look into your souls,
Remembering how the theatre of the world
Is wider, in whose eye ye are judged that judge,
Than this one realm of England.
Burghley. Toward that realm
Suffice it here that, madam, you stand charged
With deadly purpose: being of proven intent
To have your son conveyed to Spain, and give
The title you pretend upon our crown
Up with his wardship to King Philip.
Mary Stuart. Nay,
I have no kingdom left to assign, nor crown
Whereof to make conveyance: yet is this
But lawful, that of all things which are mine
I may dispose at pleasure, and to none
Stand on such count accountable.
Burghley. So be it
So far as may be; but your ciphers sent
By Curle's plain testimony to Babington,

To the lord Lodovic, and to Fernihurst,
Once provost on your part in Edinburgh,
By mean of Grange your friend his father-in-law,
Speak not but as with tongue imperial, nor
Of import less than kingdoms.
Mary Stuart. Surely, sir,
Such have I writ, and many; nor therein
Beyond my birth have trespassed, to commend
That lord you speak of, and another, both
My friends in faith, to a cardinal's dignity,
And that, I trust, without offence: except
It be not held as lawful on my part
To commune with the chiefest of my creed
By written word on matters of mine own
As for your queen with churchfolk of her kind.
Burghley. Well were it, madam, that with some of yours
You had held less close communion: since by proof
Reiterated from those your secretaries
It seems you know right well that Morgan who
Sent Parry privily to despatch the queen,
And have assigned him annual pension.
Mary Stuart. This
I know not, whether or no your charge be truth;
But I do know this Morgan hath lost all
For my sake, and in honor sure I am
That rather to relieve him I stand bound,
Than to revenge an injury done your queen
By one that lives my friend, and hath deserved
Well at mine hands: yet, being not bound to this,
I did affright the man from such attempts
Of crimes against her, who contrariwise
Hath out of England openly assigned
Pensions to Gray my traitor, and the Scots
Mine adversaries, as also to my son,
To hire him to forsake me.
Burghley. Nay, but seeing
By negligence of them that steered the state
The revenues of Scotland sore impaired,
Somewhat in bounty did her grace bestow
Upon your son the king, her kinsman: whom
She would not, being to her so near of blood,
Forget from charity. No such help it was,
Nor no such honest service, that your friends
Designed you, who by letters hither writ
To Paget and Mendoza sent as here
Large proffers of strange aid from over-sea
To right you by her ruin.
Mary Stuart. Here was naught
Aimed for your queen's destruction: nor is this
Against me to be charged, that foreign friends
Should labor for my liberty. Thus much
At sundry times I have signified aloud
By open message to her, that I would still
Seek mine own freedom. Who shall bar me this?
Who tax me with unreason, that I sent
Unjust conditions on my part to be
To her propounded, which now many times
Have alway found rejection? yea, when even
For hostages I proffered in my stead
To be delivered up with mine own son
The Duke of Guise's, both to stand in pledge
That nor your queen nor kingdom should through me
Take aught of damage; so that hence by proof
I see myself utterly from all hope
Already barred of freedom. But I now
Am dealt with most unworthily, whose fame

And honorable repute are called in doubt
Before such foreign men of law as may
By miserable conclusions of their craft
Draw every thin and shallow circumstance
Out into compass of a consequence:
Whereas the anointed heads and consecrate
Of princes are not subject to such laws
As private men are. Next, whereas ye are given
Authority but to look such matters through
As tend to the hurt of your queen's person, yet
Here is the cause so handled, and so far
Here are my letters wrested, that the faith
Which I profess, the immunity and state
Of foreign princes, and their private right
Of mutual speech by word reciprocate
From royal hand to royal, all in one
Are called in question, and myself by force
Brought down beneath my kingly dignity,
And made to appear before a judgment-seat
As one held guilty; to none end but this,
All to none other purpose, but that I
Might from all natural favor of the queen
Be quite excluded, and my right cut off
From claim hereditary: whereas I stand
Here of mine own good-will to clear myself
Of all objected to me, lest I seem
To have aught neglected in the full defence
Of mine own innocency and honor. This
Would I bring likewise in your minds, how once
This queen herself of yours, Elizabeth,
Was drawn in question of conspiracy
That Wyatt raised against her sister, yet
Ye know she was most innocent. For me,
With very heart's religion I affirm,
Though I desire the Catholics here might stand
Assured of safety, this I would not yet
Buy with the blood and death of any one.
And on mine own part rather would I play
Esther than Judith; for the people's sake
To God make intercession, than deprive
The meanest of the people born of life.
Mine enemies have made broad report aloud
That I was irreligious: yet the time
Has been, I would have learnt the faith ye hold,
But none would suffer me, for all I sought,
To find such teaching at your teachers' hands;
As though they cared not what my soul became.
And now at last, when all ye can ye have done
Against me, and have barred me from my right,
Ye may chance fail yet of your cause and hope.
To God and to the princes of my kin
I make again appeal, from you again
Record my protestation, and reject
All judgment of your court: I had rather die
Thus undishonored, even a thousand deaths,
Than so bring down the height of majesty;
Yea, and thereby confess myself as bound
By all the laws of England, even in faith
Of things religious, who could never learn
What manner of laws these were: I am destitute
Of counsellors, and who shall be my peers
To judge my cause through, and give doom thereon,

I am ignorant wholly, being an absolute queen,
And will do naught which may impair that state
In me nor other princes, nor my son;
Since yet my mind is not dejected, nor
Will I sink under my calamity.
My notes are taken from me, and no man
Dares but step forth to be my advocate.
I am clear from all crime done against the queen,
I have stirred not up one man against her: yet,
Albeit of many dangers overpast
I have thoroughly forewarned her, still I found
No credit, but have always been contemned,
Though nearest to her in blood allied. When late
Ye made association, and thereon
An act against their lives on whose behalf,
Though innocent even as ignorance of it, aught
Might be contrived to endangering of the queen
From foreign force abroad, or privy plots
At home of close rebellion, I foresaw
That, whatsoever of peril so might rise
Or more than all this for religion's sake,
My many mortal enemies in her court
Should lay upon me all the charge, and I
Bear the whole blame of all men. Certainly,
I well might take it hardly, nor without
High cause, that such confederacy was made
With mine own son, and I not knowing: but this
I speak not of, being not so grieved thereat
As that mine own dear sister, that the queen,
Is misinformed of me, and I, now kept
These many years in so strait prison, and grown
Lame of my limbs, have lien neglected, nor
For all most reasonable conditions made
Or proffered to redeem my liberty
Found audience or acceptance; and at last
Here am I set with none to plead for me.
But this I pray, that on this matter of mine
Another meeting there be kept, and I
Be granted on my part an advocate
To hold my cause up; or that, seeing ye know
I am a princess, I may be believed
By mine own word, being princely: for should I
Stand to your judgment, who most plainly I see
Are armed against me strong in prejudice,
It were mine extreme folly: more than this,
That ever I came to England in such trust
As of the plighted friendship of your queen,
And comfort of her promise. Look, my lords,
Here on this ring: her pledge of love was this,
And surety, sent me when I lay in bonds
Of mine own rebels once; regard it well;
In trust of this I came amongst you: none
But sees what faith I have found to keep this trust.

Burghley. Whereas I bear a double person, being
Commissioner first, then counsellor in this cause,
From me as from the queen's commissioner here
Receive a few words first. Your protest made
Is now on record, and a transcript of it
Shall be delivered you. To us is given
Under the queen's hand our authority, whence
Is no appeal, this grant being ratified
With the great seal of England; nor are we

/ith prejudice come hither, but to judge
y the straight rule of justice. On their part,
hese the queen's learned counsel here in place
o level at nothing else but that the truth
ay come to light, how far you have made offence
gainst the person of the queen. To us
ull power is given to hear and diligently
xamine all the matter, though yourself
/ere absent: yet for this did we desire
o have your presence here, lest we might seem
o have derogated from your honor; nor
esigned to object against you any thing
it what you knew of, or took part therein,
gainst the queen's life bent. For this were these
our letters brought in question, but to unfold
our aim against her person, and therewith
l matters to it belonging; which perforce
e so with other matters interlaced
s none may sever them. Hence was there need
t all these forth, not parcels here and there,
hose circumstances do the assurance give
on what points you dealt with Babington.

Mary Stuart. The circumstances haply may find proof,
t the fact never. Mine integrity
r on the memory nor the credit hangs
these my secretaries, albeit I know
ey are men of honest hearts: yet if they have
nfessed in fear of torture any thing,
hope of guerdon and impunity,
It may not be admitted. for just cause
Which I will otherwhere allege. Men's minds
Are with affections diversly distraught
And borne about of passion: nor would these
Have ever avowed such things against me, save
For their own hope and profit. Letters may
Toward other hands be outwardly addressed
Than they were writ for: yea, and many times
Have many things been privily slipped in mine
Which from my tongue came never. Were I not
Reft of my papers, and my secretary
Kept from me, better might I then confute
These things cast up against me.

Burghley. But there shall
Be nothing brought against you save what last
Stands charged, even since the nineteenth day of June:
Nor would your papers here avail you, seeing
Your secretaries, and Babington himself,
Being of the rack unquestioned, have affirmed
You sent those letters to him; which though yourself
Deny, yet whether more belief should here
On affirmation or negation hang
Let the commissioners judge. But, to come back,
This next I tell you as a counsellor,
Time after time you have put forth many things
Propounded for your freedom; that all these
Have fallen all profitless, 'tis long of you,
And of the Scots; in no wise of the queen.
For first the lords of Scotland, being required,
Flatly resused, to render up the king

In hostage: and when treaty last was held
Upon your freedom, then was Parry sent
By your dependant Morgan privily
To make the queen away by murder.
Mary Stuart. Ah!
You are my adversary.
Burghley. Yea, surely I am
To the queen's adversaries an adversary.
But now hereof enough: let us proceed
Henceforth to proofs.
Mary Stuart. I will not hear them.
Burghley. Yet
Hear them will we.
Mary Stuart. And in another place
I too will hear them, and defend myself.
Gawdy. First let your letters to Charles Paget speak,
Wherein you show him there is none other way
For Spain to bring the Netherlands again
To the old obedience, but by setting up
A prince in England that might help his cause;
Then to Lord Paget, to bring hastilier
His forces up for help to invade this land;
And Cardinal Allen's letter, hailing you
His most dread sovereign lady, and signifying
The matter to the prince of Parma's care
To be commended.
Mary Stuart. I am so sore beset,
I know not how by point and circumstance
To meet your manifold impeachments. This
I see through all this charge for evil truth,
That Babington and my two secretaries
Have even to excuse themselves accused me: yet,
As touching that conspiracy, this I say,
Of those six men for execution chosen
I never heard; and all the rest is naught
To this pretended purpose of your charge.
For Cardinal Allen, whatsoe'er he have writ,
I hold him for a reverend prelate, so
To be esteemed, no more: none save the Pope
Will I acknowledge for the Church's head
And sovereign thence on thought or spirit of mine;
But in what rank and place I stand esteemed
Of him and foreign princes through the world,
I know not, neither can I hinder them
By letters writ of their own hearts and hands
To hail me queen of England. As for those
Whose duty and plain allegiance sworn to me
Stands flawed in all men's sight, — my secretaries, —
These merit no belief. They which have once
Forsworn themselves, albeit they swear again
With oaths and protestations ne'er so great,
Are not to be believed. Nor may these men
By what sworn oath soever hold them bound
In court of conscience, seeing they have sworn to me
Their secrecy and fidelity before,
And are no subjects of this country Nau
Hath many times writ other than I bade,
And Curle sets down whate'er Nau bids him write;
But for my part I am ready in all to bear
The burden of their fault, save what may lay
A blot upon mine honor. Haply too
These things did they confess to save themselves;
Supposing their avowal could hurt not me,
Who, being a queen, they thought, good ignorant men,

More favorably must needs be dealt withal.
For Ballard, I ne'er heard of any such,
But of one Hallard once that proffered me
Such help as I would none of, knowing this man
Had vowed his service too to Walsingham.
Gawdy. Next, from your letters to Mendoza, writ
By Curle, as freely his confession shows,
In privy cipher, take these few brief notes
For perfect witness of your full design.
You find yourself, the Spaniard hears thereby,
More troubled what best course to take anew
For your affairs this side the sea, whereon
Charles Paget hath a charge to impart from you
Some certain overtures to Spain and him
In your behalf, whom you desire with prayer
How freely what he thinks may be obtained
Thus from the king his master. One point more
Have you reserved thereon depending, which
On your behalf you charge him send the king
Some secret word concerning, no man else,
If this be possible, being privy to it:
Even this, that seeing your son's great obstinacy
In heresy, and foreseeing too sure thereon
Most imminent danger and harm thence like to ensue
To the Catholic Church, he coming to bear rule
Within this kingdom, you are resolved at heart,
In case your son be not reduced again
To the Catholic faith before your death,
— whereof
Plainly you say small hope is yours so long
As he shall bide in Scotland, — to give up
To that said king, and grant in absolute right,
Your claim upon succession to this crown,
By your last will made; praying him on this cause
From that time forth wholly to take yourself
Into his keeping, and therewith the state
And charge of all this country; which, you say,
You cannot for discharge of conscience think
That you could put into a prince's hands
More zealous for your faith, and abler found
To build it strong upon this side again,
Even as through all parts else of Christendom.
But this let silence keep in secret, lest
Being known it be your dowry's loss in France,
And open breach in Scotland with your son,
And in this realm of England utterly
Your ruin and destruction. On your part
Next is he bidden thank his lord the king
For liberal grace and sovereign favor shown
Lord Paget and his brother, which you pray him
Most earnestly to increase, and gratify
Poor Morgan with some pension for your sake,
Who hath not for your sake only endured so much,
But for the common cause. Likewise, and last,
Is one he knows commended to his charge
With some more full supply to be sustained
Than the entertainment that yourself allot
According to the little means you have.

Burghley. Hereon stands proof apparent of that charge
Which you but now put by, that you design
To give your right supposed upon this realm
Into the Spaniard's hold; and on that cause
Lie now at Rome Allen and Parsons, men
Your servants and our traitors.
Mary Stuart. No such proof
Lives but by witness of revolted men,
My traitors and your helpers; who to me
Have broken their allegiance bound by oath.
When, being a prisoner clothed about with cares,
I languished out of hope of liberty,
Nor yet saw hope to effect of those things aught
Which many and many looked for at my hands,
Declining now through age and sickness, this
To some seemed good, even for religion's sake,
That the succession here of the English crown
Should or be stablished in the Spanish king
Or in some English Catholic. And a book
Was sent to me to avow the Spaniard's claim;
Which being of me allowed not, some there were
In whose displeasure thence I fell; but now
Seeing all my hope in England desperate grown,
I am fully minded to reject no aid
Abroad, but resolute to receive it.
Walsingham. Sirs,
Bethink you, were the kingdom so conveyed,
What should become of you and all of yours,
Estates and honors and posterities,
Being to such hands delivered.
Burghley. Nay, but these
In no such wise can be conveyed away
By personal will, but by successive right
Still must descend in heritage of law.
Whereto your own words witness, saying if this
Were blown abroad your cause were utterly
Lost in all hearts of English friends. Therein
Your thoughts hit right: for here in all men's minds
That are not mad with envying at the truth,
Death were no loathlier than a stranger king.
If you would any more, speak: if not aught,
This cause is ended.
Mary Stuart. I require again
Before a full and open parliament
Hearing, or speech in person with the queen,
Who shall, I hope, have of a queen regard,
And with the council. So, in trust hereof,
I crave a word with some of you apart,
And of this main assembly take farewell.

ACT. IV. — ELIZABETH.

SCENE I. — RICHMOND.

WALSINGHAM *and* DAVISON.

Walsingham. It is God's wrath, too sure, that holds her hand;
His plague upon this people, to preserve
By her sole mean her deadliest enemy, known
By proof more potent than approof of law
In all points guilty, but on more than all
Toward all this country dangerous. To take off
From the court held last month at Fotheringay
Authority with so full commission given
To pass upon her judgment — suddenly
Cut short by message of some three lines writ

With hurrying hand at midnight, and despatched
To maim its work upon the second day,—
What else may this be in so wise a queen
But madness, as a brand to sear the brain
Of one by God infatuate? yea, and now
That she receives the French ambassador
With one more special envoy from his king,
Except their message touch her spleen with fire,
And so undo itself, we cannot tell
What doubt may work upon her. Had we but
Some sign more evident of some private seal
Confirming toward her by more personal proof
The Scottish queen's inveteracy, for this
As for our country plucked from imminent death
We might thank God; but with such gracious words
Of piteous challenge and imperial plea
She hath wrought by letter on our mistress' mind,
We may not think her judgment so could slip,
Borne down with passion or forgetfulness,
As to leave bare her bitter root of heart
And core of evil will there laboring.

Davison. Yet
I see no shade of other surety cast
From any sign of likelihood. It were
Not shameful more than dangerous, though she bade,
To have her prisoner privily made away;
Yet stands the queen's heart well-nigh fixed hereon
When aught may seem to fix it; then as fast
Wavers, but veers to that bad point again
Whence blowing the wind blows down her honor, nor
Brings surety of life with fame's destruction.

Walsingham.. Ay,
We are no Catholic keepers, and his charge
Need fear no poison in our watch-dog's fang,
Though he show honest teeth at her, to threat
Thieves' hands with loyal danger.

Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, *attended by* BURGHLEY, LEICESTER, HUNSDON, HATTON, *and others of the Council.*

Elizabeth. No, my lords,
We are not so weak of wit as men that need
Be counselled of their enemies. Blame us not
That we accuse your friendship on this cause
Of too much fearfulness: France we will hear;
Nor doubt but France shall hear us all as loud
As friend or foe may threaten or protest,
Of our own heart advised, and resolute more
Than hearts that need men's counsel. Bid them in.

Enter CHÂTEAUNEUF *and* BELLIÈVRE, *attended.*

From our fair cousin of France what message, sirs?

Bellièvre. I, madam, have in special charge to lay
The king's mind open to your majesty,
Which gives my tongue first leave of speech more free
Than from a common envoy. Sure it is,
No man more grieves at what his heart abhors,
The counsels of your highness' enemies,
Than doth the king of France: wherein how far
The queen your prisoner have borne part, or may
Seem of their works partaker, he can judge

Naught: but much less the king may understand
What men may stand accusers, who rise up
Judge in so great a matter. Men of law
May lay their charges on a subject: but
The queen of Scotland, dowager queen of France,
And sister made by wedlock to the king,
To none being subject, can be judged of none
Without such violence done on rule as breaks
Prerogative of princes. Nor may man
That looks upon your present majesty
In such clear wise apparent, and retains
Remembrance of your name through all the world
For virtuous wisdom, bring his mind to think
That England's royal-souled Elizabeth,
Being set so high in fame, can so forget
Wise Plato's word, that common souls are wrought
Out of dull iron and slow lead, but kings
Of gold untempered with so vile alloy
As makes all metal up of meaner men.
But say this were not thus, and all men's awe
Were from all time toward kingship merely vain,
And state no more worth reverence, yet the plea
Were naught which here your ministers pretend,
That while the queen of Scots lives you may live
No day that knows not danger. Were she dead,
Rather might then your peril wax indeed
To shape and sense of heavier portent, whom
The Catholic states now threat not, nor your land,
For this queen's love, but rather for their faith's,
Whose cause, were she by violent hand removed,
Could be but furthered, and its enterprise
Put on more strong and prosperous pretext; yea,
You shall but draw the invasion on this land
Whose threat you so may think to stay, and bring
Imminence down of inroad. Thus far forth
The queen of Scots hath for your person been
Even as a targe or buckler which has caught
All intercepted shafts against your state
Shot, or a stone held fast within your hand,
Which, if you cast it thence in fear or wrath
To smite your adversary, is cast away,
And no mean left therein for menace. If
You lay but hand upon her life, albeit
There were that counselled this, her death will make
Your enemies weapons of their own despair
And give their whetted wrath excuse and edge
More plausibly to strike more perilously.
Your grace is known for strong in foresight; we
These nineteen years of your wise reign have kept
Fast watch in France upon you: of those claims
Which lineally this queen here prisoner may
Put forth on your succession have you made
The stoutest rampire of your rule: and this
Is grown a by-word with us, that their cause
Who shift the base whereon their policies lean
Bows down toward ruin: and of loyal heart
This will I tell you, madam, which hath been
Given me for truth assured of one whose place
Affirms him honorable, how openly
A certain prince's minister that well
May stand in your suspicion says abroad

That for his master's greatness it were good
The queen of Scots were lost already, seeing
He is well assured the Catholics here should then
All wholly range them on his master's part.
Thus long hath reigned your highness happily,
Who have loved fair temperance more than violence: now,
While honor bids have mercy, wisdom holds
Equal at least the scales of interest. Think
What name shall yours be found in time far hence,
Even as you deal with her that in your hand
Lies not more subject than your fame to come
In men's repute that shall be. Bid her live,
And ever shall my lord stand bound to you,
And you forever firm in praise of men.

Elizabeth. I am sorry, sir, you are hither come from France
Upon no better errand. I appeal
To God for judge between my cause and hers
Whom here you stand for. In this realm of mine
The queen of Scots sought shelter, and therein
Hath never found but kindness; for which grace
In recompense she hath three times sought my life.
No grief that on this head yet ever fell
Shook ever from mine eyes so many a tear
As this last plot upon it. I have read
As deep, I doubt me, in as many books
As any queen or prince in Christendom,
Yet never chanced on aught so strange and sad
As this my state's calamity. Mine own life
Is by mere nature precious to myself,
And in mine own realm I can live not safe.
I am a poor lone woman, girt about
With secret enemies that perpetually
Lay wait for me to kill me. From your king
Why have not I my traitor to my hands
Delivered up, who now this second time
Hath sought to slay me, Morgan? On my part,
Had mine own cousin Hunsdon here conspired
Against the French king's life, he had found not so
Refuge of me, nor even for kindred's sake
From the edge of law protection; and this cause
Needs present evidence of this man's mouth.

Bellièvre. Madam, there stand against the queen of Scots
Already here in England on this charge
So many and they so dangerous witnesses,
No need can be to bring one over more:
Nor can the king show such unnatural heart
As to send hither a knife for enemies' hands
To cut his sister's throat. Most earnestly
My lord expects your resolution; which
If we receive as given against his plea,
I must crave leave to part for Paris hence.
Yet give me pardon first if yet once more
I pray your highness be assured, and so
Take heed in season, you shall find this queen
More dangerous dead than living. Spare her life,
And not my lord alone, but all that reign,
Shall be your sureties in all Christian lands
Against all scathe of all conspiracies
Made on her party; while such remedies' ends
As physic states with bloodshedding, to cure
Danger by death, bring fresh calamities

Far oftener forth than the old are healed of them
Which so men thought to medicine. To refrain
From that red-handed way of rule, and set
Justice no higher than mercy sits beside,
Is the first mean of kings' prosperity
That would reign long; nor will my lord believe
Your highness could put off yourself so much
As to reverse and tread upon the law
That you thus long have kept and honorably:
But should this perilous purpose hold right on,
I am bounden by my charge to say, the king
Will not regard as liable to your laws
A queen's imperial person, nor will hold
Her death as but the general wrong of kings,
And no more his than as his brethren's all,
But as his own and special injury done,
More than to these injurious.
Elizabeth. Doth your lord
Bid you speak thus?
Bellièvre. Ay, madam: from his mouth
Had I command what speech to use.
Elizabeth. You have done
Better to speak than he to send it. Sir,
You shall not presently depart this land
As one denied of mere discourtesy.
I will return an envoy of mine own
To speak for me at Paris with the king.
You shall bear back a letter from my hand,
And give your lord assurance, having seen,
I cannot be so frighted with men's threats
That they shall not much rather move my mind
To quicken than to slack the righteous doom
Which none must think by menace to put back,
Or daunt it with defiance. Sirs, good day. [*Exeunt Ambassadors.*
I were as one belated with false lights
If I should think to steer my darkglin way
By twilight furtherance of their wiles and words.
Think you, my lords, France yet would have her live?
Burghley. If there be other than the apparent end
Hid in this mission to your majesty,
Mine envoys can by no means fathom it,
Who deal for me at Paris: fear of Spain
Lays double hand as 'twere upon the king,
Lest by removal of the queen of Scots
A way be made for peril in the claim
More potent then of Philip; and if there come
From his Farnese note of enterprise
Or danger this way tending, France will yet
Cleave to your friendship though his sister die.
Elizabeth. So, in your mind, this half-souled brother would
Steer any way that might keep safe his sail
Against a southern wind, which here, he thinks,
Her death might strengthen from the north again
To blow against him off our subject straits,
Made servile then and Spanish? Yet perchance
There swells behind our seas a heart too high
To bow more easily down, and bring this land
More humbly to such handling, than their waves
Bow down to ships of strangers, or their storms
To breath of any lord on earth but God.
What thinks our cousin?
Hunsdon. That if Spain or France
Or both be stronger than the heart in us
Which beats to battle ere they menace, why,
In God's name, let them rise and make their prey

Of what was England; but if neither be, —
The smooth-cheeked French man-harlot, nor that hand
Which holp to light Rome's fires with English limbs, —
Let us not keep, to make their weakness strong,
A pestilence here alive in England, which
Gives force to their faint enmities, and burns
Half the heart out of loyal trust and hope
With heat that kindles treason.
Elizabeth. By this light,
I have heard worse counsel from a wise man's tongue
Than this clear note of forthright soldiership.
How say you, Dudley, to it?
Leicester. Madam, ere this
You have had my mind upon the matter, writ
But late from Holland, that no public stroke
Should fall upon this princess, who may be
By privy death more happily removed
Without impeach of majesty, nor leave
A sign against your judgment, to call down
Blame of strange kings for wrong to kingship wrought
Though right were done to justice.
Elizabeth. Of your love
We know it is that comes this counsel; nor,
Had we such friends of all our servants, need
Our mind be now distraught with dangerous doubts
That find no screen from dangers. Yet meseems
One doubt stands now removed, if doubt there were
Of aught from Scotland ever: Walsingham,
You should have there intelligence whereof
To make these lords with us partakers.
Walsingham. Nay,
Madam, no more than from a trustless hand
Protest and promise: of those twain that come
Hot on these Frenchmen's heels in embassy,
He that in counsel on this cause was late
One with my lord of Leicester now, to rid
By draught of secret death this queen away,
Bears charge to say as these gone hence have said
In open audience, but by personal note
Hath given me this to know, that howsoe'er
His king indeed desire her life be spared,
Much may be wrought upon him, would your grace
More richly line his ragged wants with gold,
And by full utterance of your parliament
Approve him heir in England.
Elizabeth. Ay! no more?
God's blood! what grace is proffered us at need,
And on what mild conditions! Say I will not
Redeem such perils at so dear a price,
Shall not our pensioner too join hands with France,
And pay my gold with iron barter back
At edge of sword he dares not look upon,
They tell us, for the scathe and scare he took
Even in this woman's womb when shot and steel
Undid the manhood in his veins unborn,
And left his tongue's threats handless?
Walsingham. Men there be,
Your majesty must think, who bear but ill,
For pride of country and high-heartedness,
To see the king they serve your servant so
That not his mother's life and once their queen's
Being at such point of peril can enforce
One warlike word of his, for chance of war

Conditional against you. Word came late
From Edinburgh, that there the citizens
With hoot and hiss had bayed him through the streets
As he went heartless by; of whom they had heard
This published saying, that in his personal mind
The blood of kindred or affinity
So much not binds us as the friendship pledged
To them that are not of our blood: and this
Stands clear for certain, that no breath of war
Shall breathe from him against us though she die,
Except his titular claim be reft from him
On our succession; and that all his mind
Is but to reign unpartnered with a power
Which should weigh down that half his kingdom's weight
Left to his hand's share nominally in hold.
And for his mother, this would he desire,
That she were kept from this day to her death
Close prisoner in one chamber, never more
To speak with man or woman; and hereon
That proclamation should be made of her
As of one subject formally declared
To the English law whereby, if she offend
Again with iterance of conspiracy,
She shall not as a queen again be tried,
But as your vassal and a private head
Live liable to the doom and stroke of death.
Elizabeth. She is bounden to him as he long since to her,
Who would have given his kingdom up at least
To his dead father's slayer; in whose red hand
How safe had lain his life too, doubt may guess,
Which yet kept dark her purpose then on him,
Dark now no more to us-ward. Think you then
That they belie him, whose suspicion saith
His ear and heart are yet inclined to Spain,
If from that brother-in-law that was of ours,
And would have been our bridegroom, he may win
Help of strange gold and foreign soldiership,
With Scottish furtherance of those Catholic lords
Who are stronger-spirited in their faith than ours,
Being harried more of heretics, as they say,
Than these within our borders, to root out
The creed there stablished now, and do to death
Its ministers, with all the lords their friends,
Lay hands on all strong places there, and rule
As prince upon their party? since he fain
From ours would be divided, and cast in
His lot with Rome against us too, from these
Might he but earn assurance of their faith,
Revolting from his own. May these things be
More than mere muttering breath of trustless lies,
And half his heart yet hover toward our side
For all such hope or purpose?
Walsingham. Of his heart
We know not, madam, surely; nor doth he
Who follows fast on their first envoy sent,
And writes to excuse him of his message here
On her behalf apparent, but in sooth
Aimed otherwise; the Master I mean of Gray,

Who swears me here by letter, if he be not
True to the queen of England, he is content
To have his head fall on a scaffold: saying,
To put from him this charge of embassy
Had been his ruin, but the meaning of it
Is modest and not menacing; whereto
If you will yield not yet to spare the life
So near its forfeit now, he thinks it well
You should be pleased by some commission given
To stay by the way his comrade and himself,
Or bid them back.
Elizabeth. What man is this, then, sent
With such a knave to fellow?
Walsingham. No such knave,
But still your prisoner's friend of old time found, —
Sir Robert Melville.
Elizabeth. And an honest man
As faith might wish her servants; but what pledge
Will these produce me for security
That I may spare this dangerous life, and live
Unscathed of after practice?
Walsingham. As I think,
The king's self and his whole nobility
Will be her personal pledges; and her son,
If England yield her to his hand in charge,
On no less strait a bond will undertake
For her safe keeping.
Elizabeth. That were even to arm
With double power mine adversary, and make him
The stronger by my hand to do me hurt —
Were he mine adversary indeed: which yet
I will not hold him. Let them find a mean
For me to live unhurt, and save her life,
It shall well please me. Say this king of Scots
Himself would give his own inheritance up
Pretended in succession, if but once
Her hand were found, or any friend's of hers,
Again put forth upon me for her sake,
Why, haply so might hearts be satisfied
Of lords and commons then to let her live.
But this I doubt he had rather take her life
Himself than yield up to us for pledge; and less,
These men shall know of me, I will not take
In price of her redemption: which were else,
And haply may in no wise not be held,
To this my loyal land and mine own trust
A deadlier stroke and blast of sound more dire
Than noise of fleets invasive.
Walsingham. Surely so
Would all hearts hold it, madam, in that land
That are not enemies of the land and yours;
For ere the doom had been proclaimed an hour
Which gave to death your main foe's head and theirs,
Yourself have heard what fire of joy brake forth
From all your people; how their church-towers all
Rang in with jubilant acclaim of bells
The day that bore such tidings, and the night
That laughed aloud with lightning of their joy
And thundered round its triumph: twice twelve hours
This tempest of thanksgiving roared and shone
Sheer from the Solway's to the Channel's foam
With light as from one festal-flaming hearth
And sound as of one trumpet; not a tongue

But praised God for it, or heart that leapt not up,
Save of your traitors and their country's: these
Withered at heart and shrank their heads in close,
As though the bright sun's were a basilisk's eye,
And light, that gave all others comfort, flame
And smoke to theirs of hell's own darkness, whence
Such eyes were blinded or put out with fire.
Elizabeth. Yea, I myself, I mind me, might not sleep
Those twice twelve hours thou speak'st of. By God's light,
Be it most in love of me or fear of her
I know not, but my people seems in sooth
Hot and an hungered on this trail of hers:
Nor is it a people bloody-minded, used
To lap the life up of an enemy's vein
Who bleeds to death unweaponed: our good hounds
Will course a quarry soldier-like in war,
But rage not hangman-like upon the prey,
To flesh their fangs on limbs that strive not: yet
Their hearts are hotter on this course than mine,
Which most was deadliest aimed at.
Walsingham. Even for that
How should not theirs be hot as fire from hell
To burn your danger up, and slay that soul
Alive that seeks it? Thinks your majesty
There beats a heart where treason hath not turned
All English blood to poison, which would feel
No deadlier pang of dread more deathful to it
To hear of yours endangered than to feel
A sword against its own life bent, or know
Death imminent as darkness overhead
That takes the noon from one man's darkening eye
As must your death from all this people's? You
Are very England: in your light of life
This living land of yours walks only safe,
And all this breathing people with your breath
Breathes unenslaved, and draws at each pulse in
Freedom: your eye is light of theirs, your word
As God's to comfort England, whose whole soul
Is made with yours one, and her witness you
That Rome or hell shall take not hold on her
Again till God be wroth with us so much
As to reclaim for heaven the star that yet
Lights all your land that looks on it, and gives
Assurance higher than danger dares assail
Save in this lady's name and service, who
Must now from you take judgment.
Elizabeth. Must! by God,
I know not *must* but as a word of mine,
My tongue's and not mine ear's familiar. Sirs,
Content yourselves to know this much of us,
Or having known remember, that we sent
The lord of Buckhurst and our servant Beale
To acquaint this queen our prisoner with the doom
Confirmed on second trial against her; saying
Her word can weigh not down the weightier guilt
Approved upon her, and by parliament
Since fortified with sentence. Yea, my lords,
Ye should forget not how by message then
I bade her know of me with what strong force

f strenuous and invincible argument
am urged to hold no more in such
delay
ne process of her execution, being
ne seed-plot of these late conspiracies,
ieir author and chief motive; and am
told
iat if I yield not, mine the guilt must
be
God's and in the whole world's suf-
fering sight
f all the miseries and calamities
) ensue on my refusal: whence, albeit
cnow not yet how God shall please to
incline
y heart on that behalf, I have thought
it meet
conscience yet that she should be
forewarned,
iat so she might bethink her of her
sins
)ne both toward God offensive and
to me,
id pray for grace to be true penitent
)r all these faults: which, had the
main fault reached
) farther than mine own poor person,
God
ands witness with what truth my heart
protests
reely would have pardoned. She to
this
akes bitter answer as of desperate
heart,
I we may wreak our worst upon her;
whom
iving to death condemned, we may
fulfil
r wicked work, and God in paradise
ith just atonement shall requite her.
This
see is all the pardon she will ask,
ing only, and even as 'twere with
prayer, desired
crave of us forgiveness; and there-
on
ing by Lord Buckhurst charged on
this point home,
at by her mean the Catholics here
had learnt
hold her for their sovereign, — on
which cause
r my religion nor myself might live
Uncharged with danger while her life
should last, —
She answering gives God thanks aloud
to be
Held of so great account upon his side,
And in God's cause and in the Church
of God's
Rejoicingly makes offering of her life;
Which I, God knows how unrejoicingly,
Can scarce, ye tell me, choose but take,
or yield
At least for you to take it. Yet, being
told
It is not for religion she must die,
But for a plot by compass of her own
Laid to dethrone me and destroy, she
casts
Again this answer barbed with mockery
back, —
She was not so presumptuous born, to
aspire
To two such ends yet ever: yea, so far
She dwelt from such desire removed in
heart,
She would not have me suffer by her
will
The fillip of a finger; though herself
Be persecuted even as David once,
And her mishap be that she cannot so
Fly by the window forth as David:
whence
It seems she likens us to Saul, and looks
Haply to see us as on Mount Gilboa
fallen,
Where yet, for all the shooters on her
side,
Our shield shall be not vilely cast away,
As of one unanointed. Yet, my lords,
If England might but by my death
attain
A state more flourishing with a better
prince,
Gladly would I lay down my life; who
have
No care save only for my people's sake
To keep it: for myself, in all the world
I see no great cause why for all this coil
I should be fond to live or fear to die.
If I should say unto you that I mean
To grant not your petition, by my faith,
More should I so say haply than I mean:
Or should I say I mean to grant it, this
Were, as I think, to tell you of my mind

More than is fit for you to know: and thus
I must for all petitionary prayer
Deliver you an answer answerless.
Yet will I pray God lighten my dark mind,
That being illumined it may thence foresee
What for his church and all this commonwealth
May most be profitable: and this once known,
My hand shall halt not long behind his will.

SCENE II. — FOTHERINGAY

SIR AMYAS PAULET *and* SIR DREW DRURY.

Paulet. I never gave God heartier thanks than these
I give to have you partner of my charge
Now most of all, these letters being to you
No less designed than me, and you in heart
One with mine own upon them. Certainly,
When I put hand to pen this morning past,
That master Davison by mine evidence
Might note what sore disquietudes I had
To increase my griefs before of body and mind,
I looked for no such word to cut off mine
As these to us both of Walsingham's and his.
Would rather yet I had cause to still complain
Of those unanswered letters two months past,
Than thus be certified of such intents
As God best knoweth I never sought to know,
Or search out secret causes: though to hear
Nothing at all did breed, as I confessed,
In me some hard conceits against myself,
I had rather yet rest ignorant than ashamed
Of such ungracious knowledge. This shall be
Fruit as I think of dread wrought on the queen
By those seditious rumors whose report
Blows fear among the people lest our charge
Escape our trust, or, as they term it now,
Be taken away, — such apprehensive tongues
So phrase it, — and her freedom strike men's hearts
More deep than all these flying fears that say
London is fired of Papists, or the Scots
Have crossed in arms the Border, or the north
Is risen again rebellious, or the Guise
Is disembarked in Sussex, or that now
In Milford Haven rides a Spanish fleet, —
All which, albeit but footless floating lies,
May all too easily smite and work too far
Even on the heart most royal in the world
That ever was a woman's.

Drury. Good my friend,
These noises come without a thunder bolt
In such dense air of dusk expectancy
As all this land lies under; nor will some
Doubt or think much to say of those reports,
They are broached and vented of men's credulous mouths
Whose ears have caught them from such lips as meant
Merely to strike more terror in the queen,
And wring that warrant from her hovering hand
Which falters yet and flutters on her lip
While the hand hangs and trembles half advanced
Upon that sentence which, the treasurer said,
Should well ere this have spoken, seeing it was
More than a full month old and four days more

/hen he so looked to hear the word of it
/hich yet lies sealed of silence.
Paulet. Will you say,
r any as wise and loyal, say or think
was but for a show, to scare men's wits,
hey have raised this hue and cry upon her flight
ıpposed from hence, to waken Exeter
/ith noise from Honiton and Sampfield spread
f proclamation to detain all ships,
nd lay all highways for her day and night,
nd send like precepts out four manner of ways
rom town to town, to make in readiness
heir armor and artillery, with all speed,
ı pain of death, for London by report
/as set on fire? though, God be therefore praised,
e know this is not, yet the noise hereof
/ere surely not to be neglected, seeing
ıere is, meseems, indeed no readier way
› levy forces for the achieving that
hich so these lewd reporters feign to fear.
Drury. Why, in such mighty matters and such mists
ise men may think what hardly fools would say,
ıd eyes get glimpse of more than sight hath leave
› give commission for the babbling tongue
oud to cry they have seen. This noise that was
›on one Arden's flight, a traitor, whence
ar flew last week all round us, gave but note
›w lightly may men's minds take fire, and words
ke wing that have no feet to fare upon
›re solid than a shadow.
Paulet. Nay, he was
caped indeed: and every day thus brings
Forth its new mischief; as this last month did
Those treasons of the French ambassador
Designed against our mistress, which God's grace
Laid by the knave's mean bare to whom they sought
For one to slay her, and of the Pope's hand earn
Ten thousand blood-incrusted crowns a year
To his most hellish hire. You will not say
This too was merely fraud or vision wrought
By fear or cloudy falsehood?
Drury. I will say
No more or surelier than I know: and this
I know not thoroughly to the core of truth
Or heart of falsehood in it. A man may lie
Merely, or trim some bald lean truth with lies,
Or patch bare falsehood with some tatter of truth,
And each of these pass current: but of these
Which likeliest may this man's tale be who gave
Word of his own temptation by these French
To hire them such a murderer, and avowed
He held it godly cunning to comply,
And bring this envoy's secretary to sight
Of one clapped up for debts in Newgate, who
Being thence released might readily, as he said,
Even by such means as once this lady's lord
Was made away with, make the queen away
With powder fired beneath her bed — why, this,
Good sooth, I guess not; but I doubt the man
To be more liar than fool, and yet, God wot,

More fool than traitor; most of all intent
To conjure coin forth of the Frenchman's purse
With tricks of mere effontery: thus at least
We know did Walsingham esteem of him:
And if by Davison held of more account,
Or merely found more serviceable, and made
A mean to tether up those quick French tongues
From threat or pleading for this prisoner's life,
I cannot tell, and care not. Though the queen
Hath stayed this envoy's secretary from flight
Forth of the kingdom, and committed him
To ward within the Tower while Châteauneuf
Himself should come before a council held
At my lord treasurer's, where being thus accused
At first he cared not to confront the man,
But stood upon his office, and the charge
Of his king's honor and prerogative —
Then bade bring forth the knave, who being brought forth
Outfaced him with insistence front to front,
And took the record of this whole tale's truth
Upon his soul's damnation, challenging
The Frenchman's answer in denial hereof,
That of his own mouth had this witness been
Traitorously tempted, and by personal plea
Directly drawn to treason: which awhile
Struck dumb the ambassador as amazed with wrath,
Till presently, the accuser being removed,
He made avowal this fellow some while since
Had given his secretary to wit there lay
One bound in Newgate who being thence released
Would take the queen's death on his hand: whereto
Answering, he bade the knave avoid his house
On pain, if once their ways should cross, to be
Sent bound before the council: who replied
He had done foul wrong to take no further note,
But being made privy to this damned device
Keep close its perilous knowledge; whence the queen
Might well complain against him; and hereon
They fell to wrangling on this cause, that he
Professed himself to no man answerable
For declaration or for secret held
Save his own master: so that now is gone
Sir William Wade to Paris, not with charge
To let the king there know this queen shall live,
But to require the ambassador's recall,
And swift delivery of our traitors there
To present justice: yet may no man say
For all these half-faced scares and policies,
Here was more sooth than seeming.
Paulet. Why, these crafts
Were shameful then as fear's most shameful self,
If thus your wit read them aright; and we
Should for our souls and lives alike do ill
To jeopard them on such men's suretyship given
As make no more account of simple faith
Than true men make of liars: and these are they,
Our friends and masters, that rebuke us both

peech late uttered of her majesty
lack of zeal in service and of care
looked for at our hands, in that we have not
ll this time, unprompted, of ourselves
id out some way to cut this queen's life off,
ng how great peril, while her enemy lives,
is hourly subject unto; saying, she notes,
les a kind of lack of love to her,
in we have not that particular care
ooth of our own safeties, or indeed
he faith rather and the general good,
politic reason bids; especially,
ng so strong a warrant and such ground
satisfaction of our consciences
Godward, and discharge of credit kept
reputation toward the world, as is
oath whereby we stand associated
rosecute inexorably to death
with our joint and our particular force
y whose hand and all on whose behalf
sovereign's life is struck at: as by proof
ls charged upon our prisoner. So they write,
hough the queen's own will had warranted
words that by her will's authority
e blotted from the bond, whereby that head
doomed on whose behoof her life should be
reason threatened: for she would not have
t pass which grieved her subjects' consciences,
aid, or might abide not openly
whole world's view: nor would she any one
punished for another's fault: and so
off the plea whereon she now desires
That we should dip our secret hands in blood
With no direction given of her own mouth
So to pursue that dangerous head to death
By whose assent her life were sought: for this
Stands fixed for only warrant of such deed,
And this we have not, but her word instead
She takes it most unkindly toward herself
That men professing toward her loyally
That love that we do should in any sort,
For lack of our own duty's full discharge,
Cast upon her the burden, knowing as we
Her slowness to shed blood, much more of one
So near herself in blood as is this queen,
And one with her in sex and quality.
And these respects, they find, or so profess,
Do greatly trouble her: who hath sundry times
Protested, they assure us, earnestly,
That if regard of her good subjects' risk
Did not more move her than the personal fear
Of proper peril to her, she never would
Be drawn to assent unto this bloodshedding:
And so to our good judgments they refer
These speeches they thought meet to acquaint us with
As passed but lately from her majesty,
And to God's guard commend us: which God knows
We should much more need than deserve of him
Should we give ear to this, and as they bid
Make heretics of these papers; which three times
You see how Davison hath enforced on us:

But they shall taste no fire for me, nor pass
Back to his hands till copies writ of them
Lie safe in mine for sons of mine to keep
In witness how their father dealt herein.
Drury. You have done the wiselier: and what word soe'er
Shall bid them know your mind, I am well assured
It well may speak for me too.
Paulet. Thus it shall:
That having here his letters in my hands,
I would not fail, according to his charge,
To send back answer with all possible speed
Which shall deliver unto him my great grief
And bitterness of mind, in that I am
So much unhappy as I hold myself
To have lived to look on this unhappy day,
When I by plain direction am required
From my most gracious sovereign's mouth to do
An act which God forbiddeth, and the law.
Hers are my goods and livings, and my life,
Held at her disposition, and myself
Am ready so to lose them this next day
If it shall please her so, acknowledging
I hold them of her mere goodwill, and do not
Desire them to enjoy them but so long
As her great grace gives leave: but God forbid
That I should make for any grace of hers
So foul a shipwreck of my conscience, or
Leave ever to my poor posterity
So great a blot, as privily to shed blood
With neither law nor warrant. So, in trust
That she, of her accustomed clemency,
Will take my dutiful answer in good part,
By his good mediation, as returned
From one who never will be less love,
Honor, obedience, duty to his queen
Than any Christian subject living, th
To God's grace I commit him.
Drury. Though I doubt
She haply shall be much more wr hereat
Than lately she was gracious, when s bade
God treblefold reward you for yo charge
So well discharged, saluting you name
Most faithful and most careful, y shall do
Most like a wise man loyally to writ
But such good words as these, wher myself
Subscribe in heart: though being named herein
(Albeit to both seem these late lett meant)
Nor this directed to me, I forbear
To make particular answer. And deed,
Were danger less apparent in her lif
To the heart's life of all this liv land,
I would this woman might not di all
By secret stroke nor open sentence.
Paulet. I
Will praise God's mercy most for t of all,
When I shall see the murderous ca removed
Of its most mortal peril: nor desire
A guerdon ampler from the queen serve,
Besides her commendations of my fa
For spotless actions and for safe gards,
Than to see judgment on her ene done;
Which were for me that recompe indeed
Whereof she writes as one not gi to all,
But for such merit reserved to crown claim
Above all common service: nor s this

ıld any treasure's promise in the world
ease those travails and rejoice this heart
ıt hers too much takes thought of, as to read
charge to carry for her sake in it
s most just thought, that she can balance not
value that her grace doth prize me at
ıny weight of judgment: yet it were
ord to me more comfortable at heart
ın these, though these most gracious, that should speak
ıth to her death's contriver.
Drury. Nay, myself
re fain to see this coil wound up, and her
ıoved that makes it: yet such things will pluck
d at men's hearts that think on them, and move
ıpassion that such long strange years should find
strange an end: nor shall men ever say
she was born right royal; full of sins,
ay be, and by circumstance or choice
d and defaced with bloody stains and black,
ıerciful, unfaithful, but of heart
ery high, so swift of spirit and clear,
xtreme danger and pain so lifted up,
f all violent things inviolable,
arge of courage, so superb of soul,
heathed with iron mind invincible
arms unbreached of fireproof constancy, —
hame not shaken, fear or force or death,
nge, or all confluence of calamities, —
so at her worst need beloved, and still,
ed of help and honor when she seemed,
ther women would be, and of hope
ıped, still so of herself adorable
ınds not always all ignobly mad
all made poisonous with false grain of faith,
She shall be a world's wonder to all time,
A deadly glory watched of marvelling men
Not without praise, not without noble tears,
And if without what she would never have
Who had it never, — pity, — yet from none
Quite without reverence and some kind of love
For that which was so royal. Yea, and now
That at her prayer we here attend on her,
If, as I think, she have in mind to send
Aught written to the queen, what we may do
To further her desire shall on my part
Gladly be done, so be it the grace she craves
Be naught akin to danger.
Paulet. It shall be
The first of all, then, craved by her of man,
Or by man's service done her, that was found
So harmless ever.
Enter MARY STUART *and* MARY BEATON.
Mary Stuart. Sirs, in time past by
I was desirous many times, ye know,
To have written to your queen: but since I have had
Advertisement of my conviction, seeing
I may not look for life, my soul is set
On preparation for another world:
Yet none the less, not for desire of life,
But for my conscience's discharge and rest,
And for my last farewell, I have at heart
By you to send her a memorial writ
Of somewhat that concerns myself, when I
Shall presently be gone out of this world.
And to remove from her, if such be there,
Suspicion of all danger in receipt
Of this poor paper that shall come from me,

Myself will take the assay of it, and so
With mine own hands to yours deliver it.
Paulet. Will you not also, madam, be content
To seal and close it in my presence up?
Mary Stuart. Sir, willingly; but I beseech your word
Pledged for its safe delivery to the queen.
Paulet. I plight my faith it shall be sent to her.
Mary Stuart. This further promise I desire, you will
Procure me from above certificate
It hath been there delivered.
Drury. This is more
Than we may stand so pledged for: in our power
It is to send, but far beyond our power,
As being above our place, to promise you
Certificate or warrant.
Mary Stuart. Yet I trust
Consideration may be had of me
After my death, as one derived in blood
From your queen's grandsire, with all mortal rites
According with that faith I have professed
All my life-days as I was born therein.
This is the sum of all mine askings: whence
Well might I take it in ill part of you
To wish me seal my letter in your sight,
Bewraying your hard opinion of me.
Paulet. This
Your own words well might put into my mind,
That so beside my expectation made
Proffer to take my first assay for me
Of the outer part of it: for you must think
I was not ignorant that by sleight of craft
There might be as great danger so conveyed
Within the letter as without, and thus
I could not for ill thoughts of you be blamed,
Concurring with you in this jealousy:
For had yourself not moved it of yourself
Sir Drew nor I had ever thought on it.
Mary Stuart. The occasion why moved it was but this:
That having made my custom in ti past
To send sometimes some tokens to yo queen,
At one such time that I sent certa clothes
One standing by advised her cause gifts
To be tried thoroughly ere she touch them; which
I have since observed, and taken ord thus
With Nau, when last he tarried at t court,
To do the like to a fur-fringed count pane
Which at that time I sent: and as this,
Look what great danger lies betwe these leaves
That I dare take and handle in hands,
And press against my face each part them
Held open thus, and either deadly si
Wherein your fear smells death so privily.
Paulet. Madam, when so you charg your secretary
Her majesty was far from doubt, think,
Or dream of such foul dealing; and would
Suspicion since had found no just ca given,
And then things had not been as n they are.
Mary Stuart. But things are as th are, and here I stand
Convicted, and not knowing how ma hours
I have to live yet.
Paulet. Madam, you shall live
As many hours as God shall please; this
May be said truly, that you here h been
Convicted in most honorable sort
And favorable.
Mary Stuart. What favor have found?

Paulet. Your cause hath been examined scrupulously
many our eldest nobles of this realm,
nereas by law you should but have been tried
twelve men as a common person.
Mary Stuart. Nay,
ur noblemen must by their peers be tried.
Paulet. All strangers of what quality soe'er
matter of crime are only to be tried
other princes' territories by law
at in that realm bears rule.
Mary Stuart. You have your laws:
other princes all will think of it
they see cause; and mine own son is now
more a child, but come to man's estate,
d he will think of these things bitterly.
Drury. Ingratitude, whate'er he think of them,
odious in all persons, but of all
nightiest personages most specially
st hateful: and it will not be denied
that the queen's grace greatly hath deserved
h of yourself and of your son.
Mary Stuart. What boon
ll I acknowledge? Being in bonds, I am set
e from the world, and therefore am I not
aid to speak; I have had the favor here
have been kept prisoner now these many years
inst my will and justice.
Paulet. Madam, this
s a great favor, and without this grace
had not lived to see these days.
Mary Stuart. How so?
Paulet. Seeing your own subjects did pursue you, and had
best in your own country.
Mary Stuart. That is true,
ause your Mildmay's ill persuasions first
le me discharge my forces, and then caused
Mine enemies to burn my friends' main holds,
Castles and houses.
Paulet. Howsoe'er, it was
By great men of that country that the queen
Had earnest suit made to her to have yourself
Delivered to them, which her grace denied,
And to their great misliking.
Drury. Seventeen years
She hath kept your life to save it; and whereas
She calls your highness sister, she hath dealt
In truth and deed most graciously with you
And sister like, in seeking to preserve
Your life at once and honor.
Mary Stuart. Ay! wherein?
Drury. In that commission of your causes held
At York, which was at instance of your friends
Dissolved to save your honor.
Mary Stuart. No: the cause
Why that commission was dissolved indeed
Was that my friends could not be heard to inform
Against my loud accusers.
Paulet. But your friend
The bishop's self of Ross, your very friend,
Hath written that this meeting was dismissed
All only in your favor; and his book
Is extant: and this favor is but one
Of many graces which her majesty
Hath for mere love extended to you.
Mary Stuart. This
Is one great favor, even to have kept me here
So many years against my will.
Paulet. It was
For your own safety, seeing your countrymen
Sought your destruction, and to that swift end
Required to have you yielded up to them,
As was before said.

Mary Stuart. Nay, then, I will speak.
I am not afraid. It was determined here
That I should not depart; and when I was
Demanded by my subjects, this I know,
That my lord treasurer with his own close hand
Writ in a packet which by trustier hands
Was intercepted, and to me conveyed,
To the earl of Murray, that the devil was tied
Fast in a chain, and they could keep her not,
But here she should be safely kept.
Drury. That earl
Was even as honorable a gentleman
As I knew ever in that country bred.
Mary Stuart. One of the worst men of the world he was:
A foul adulterer, one of general lust,
A spoiler and a murderer.
Drury. Six weeks long,
As I remember, here I saw him; where He bore him very gravely, and maintained
The reputation even on all men's tongues
In all things of a noble gentleman:
Nor have I heard him evil spoken of
Till this time ever.
Mary Stuart. Yea, my rebels here
Are honest men, and by the queen have been
Maintained.
Paulet. You greatly do forget yourself
To charge her highness with so foul a fault,
Which you can never find ability
To prove on her.
Mary Stuart. What did she with the French,
I pray you, at Newhaven?
Paulet. It appears
You have conceived so hardly of the queen
My mistress, that you still inveterately
Interpret all her actions to the worst,
Not knowing the truth of all the cause; but yet
I dare assure you that her majesty
Had most just cause and righteous, i respect
As well of Calais as for other ends,
To do the thing she did, and more t have done,
Had it so pleased her to put forth he power.
And this is in you great unthankfulnes
After so many favors and so great,
Whereof you will acknowledge in n wise
The least of any; though her majesty
Hath of her own grace merely save your life,
To the utter discontentment of the bes
Your subjects once in open parliamen
Who craved against you justice on th charge
Of civil law-breach and rebellion.
Mary Stuart. I
Know no such matter, but full well know
Sir Francis Walsingham hath openly,
Since his abiding last in Scotland, sai
That I should rue his entertainmer there.
Paulet. Madam, you have not rue it, but have been
More honorably entertained than eve yet
Was any other crown's competitor
In any realm save only this: whereof
Some have been kept close prisoner other some
Maimed and unnaturally disfigure some
Murdered.
Mary Stuart. But I was no compet tor:
All I required was in successive right
To be reputed but as next the crown.
Paulet. Nay, madam, you went fu ther, when you gave
The English arms and style, as thoug our queen
Had been but an usurper on yo right.
Mary Stuart. My husband and n kinsmen did therein
What they thought good: I had naug to do with it.
Paulet. Why would you not the loyally renounce

our claim herein pretended, but with such
ondition, that you might be authorized
ext heir apparent to the crown?
Mary Stuart. I have made
t sundry times thereon good proffers, which
ould never be accepted.
Paulet. Heretofore
hath been proved unto you presently,
hat in the very instant even of all
our treaties and most friendlike offers, were
me dangerous crafts discovered.
Mary Stuart. You must think
have some friends on earth; and if they have done
ny thing privily, what is that to me?
Paulet. Madam, it was somewhat to you, and I would
or your own sake you had forborne it, that
fter advertisement and conscience given
Morgan's devilish practice, to have killed
sacred queen, you yet would entertain
ie murderer as your servant.
Mary Stuart. I might do it
ith as good right as ever did your queen
entertain my rebels.
Drury. Be advised:
is speech is very hard, and all the case
ere differs greatly.
Mary Stuart. Yea, let this then be:
cannot yet of my conviction say
t I by partial judgment was condemned,
d the commissioners knew my son could have
right, were I convicted, and your queen
uld have no children of her womb; whereby
ey might set up what man for king they would.
Paulet. This is in you too great forgetfulness
honor and yourself, to charge these lords
With two so foul and horrible faults, as first
To take your life by partial doom from you,
And then bestow the kingdom where they liked.
Mary Stuart. Well, all is one to me: and for my part
I thank God I shall die without regret
Of any thing that I have done alive.
Paulet. I would entreat you yet be sorry at least
For the great wrong and well-deserving grief
You have done the queen, my mistress.
Mary Stuart. Nay, thereon
Let others answer for themselves: I have
Nothing to do with it. Have you borne in mind
Those matters of my moneys that we last
Conferred upon together?
Paulet. Madam, these
Are not forgotten.
Mary Stuart. Well it is if aught
Be yet at all remembered for my good.
Have here my letter sealed and superscribed,
And so farewell — or even as here men may.
[*Exeunt* PAULET *and* DRURY.
Had I that old strength in my weary limbs
That in my heart yet fails not, fain would I
Fare forth if not fare better. Tired I am,
But not so lame in spirit I might not take
Some comfort of the winter-wasted sun
This bitter Christmas to me, though my feet
Were now no firmer nor more helpful found
Than when I went but in my chair abroad
Last weary June at Chartley. I can stand
And go now without help of either side,
And bend my hand again, thou seest, to write:

I did not well perchance in sight of these
To have made so much of this lamè hand, which yet
God knows was grievous to me, and to-day
To make my letter up and superscribe
And seal it with no outward show of pain
Before their face and inquisition; yet
I care not much in player's wise piteously
To blind such eyes with feigning: though this Drew
Be gentler and more gracious than his mate,
And liker to be wrought on; but at last
What need have I of men?
Mary Beaton. What then you may,
I know not, seeing for all that was and is
We are yet not at the last; but when you had,
You have hardly failed to find more help of them
And heartier service than more prosperous queens
Exact of expectation: when your need
Was greater than your name or natural state,
And wage was none to look for but of death,
As though the expectancy thereof and hope
Were more than man's prosperities, men have given
Heart's thanks to have this gift of God and you
For dear life's guerdon, even the trust assured
To drink for you the bitterness of death.
Mary Stuart. Ay, one said once it must be,—some one said
I must be perilous ever, and my love
More deadly than my will was evil or good
Toward any of all these that through me should die:
I know not who, nor when one said it; but
I know too sure he lied not.
Mary Beaton. No; I think
This was a seer indeed. I have heard of men
That under imminence of death grew strong
With mortal foresight, yet in life-days past
Could see no foot before them, nor provide
For their own fate or fortune any thing
Against one angry chance of accident
Or passionate fault of their own loves or hates
That might to death betray them: such an one
Thus haply might have prophesied, and had
No strength to save himself.
Mary Stuart. I know not: yet
Time was when I remembered.
Mary Beaton. It should be
No enemy's saying whom you remember not;
You are wont not to forget your enemies; yet
The word rang sadder than a friend's should fall
Save in some strange pass of the spirit or flesh
For love's sake haply hurt to death.
Mary Stuart. It seems
Thy mind is bent to know the name of me,
That of myself I know not.
Mary Beaton. Nay, my mind
Has other thoughts to beat upon: for me
It may suffice to know the saying for true,
And never care who said it.
Mary Stuart. True? too sure,
God to mine heart's grief hath approved it. See,
Nor Scot nor Englishman that takes or him
The service of my sorrow, but partakes
The sorrow of my service; man by man,
As that one said, they perish of me
yea,
Were I a sword sent upon earth, or plague
Bred of aërial poison, I could be
No deadlier where unwillingly I strike
Who where I would can hurt not: Percy died

his own hand in prison, Howard by law;
se young men with strange torments done to death,
o should have rid me and the world of her
t is our scourge, and to the Church of God
pestilence that wastes it: all the north
ars yet the scars engraven of civil steel
e its last rising: nay, she saith but right,
e enemy, saying by these her servile tongues
ve brought upon her land mine own land's curse,
l a sword follows at my heel, and fire
indled of mine eyeshot. And before,
om did I love that died not of it? Whom
t I would save might I deliver, when
d once but looked on him with love, or pledged
ndship? I should have died, I think, long since,
t many might have died not, and this word
l not been written of me nor fulfilled,
perished in the saying, a prophecy
t took the prophet by the throat, and slew —
sure I think it slew him. Such a song
ht my poor servant slain before my face
e sung before the stroke of violent death
l fallen upon him there for my sake.

Mary Beaton. Ah!
think so? this remembrance was it not
t hung and hovered in your mind but now,
ed your heart backward all unwittingly
ome blind memory of the man long dead?

Mary Stuart. In sooth, I think my prophet should have been
David.

Mary Beaton. You thought of him?

Mary Stuart. An old sad thought:
The moan of it was made long since, and he
Not unremembered.

Mary Beaton. Nay, of him indeed
Record was made, — a royal record: whence
No marvel is it that you forgot not him.

Mary Stuart. I would forget no friends nor enemies: these
More needs me now remember. Think'st thou not
This woman hates me deadlier — or this queen
That is not woman — than myself could hate
Except I were as she in all things? Then
I should love no such woman as am I
Much more than she may love me: yet I am sure,
Or so near surety as all belief may be,
She dare not slay me for her soul's sake; nay,
Though that were made as light of as a leaf
Storm-shaken, in such stormy winds of state
As blow between us like a blast of death,
For her throne's sake she durst not, which must be
Broken to build my scaffold. Yet, God wot,
Perchance a straw's weight now cast in by chance
Might weigh my life down in the scale her hand
Holds hardly straight for trembling: if she be
Woman at all, so tempered naturally
And with such spirit and sense as thou and I,
Should I for wrath so far forget myself
As these men sometime charge me that I do,
My tongue might strike my head off. By this head
That yet I wear to swear by, if life be

Thankworthy, God might well be thanked for this
Of me or whoso loves me in the world,
That I spake never half my heart out yet,
For any sore temptation of them all,
To her or hers; nor ever put but once
My heart upon my paper, writing plain
The things I thought, heard, knew for truth, of her,
Believed or feigned — nay, feigned not to believe
Of her fierce follies fed with wry-mouthed praise,
And that vain ravin of her sexless lust
Which could not feed nor hide its hunger, curb
With patience nor allay with love the thirst
That mocked itself as all mouths mocked it. Ha!
What might the reading of these truths have wrought
Within her maiden mind, what seed have sown,
Trow'st thou, in her sweet spirit, of revenge
Toward me that showed her queenship, in the glass
A subject's hand of hers had put in mine,
The likeness of it loathed and laughable
As they that worshipped it with words and signs
Beheld her and bemocked her?
Mary Beaton. Certainly,
I think that soul drew never breath alive
To whom this letter might seem pardonable
Which timely you forbore to send her.
Mary Stuart. Nay,
I doubt not I did well to keep it back —
And did not ill to write it; for God knows
It was no small ease to my heart.
Mary Beaton. But say
I had not burnt it as you bade me burn,
But kept it privily safe against a need
That I might haply some time have of it?
Mary Stuart. What, to destroy me?
Mary Beaton. Hardly, sure, to save.
Mary Stuart. Why shouldst tho
think to bring me to my death?
Mary Beaton. Indeed, no man am
that love you; nor
Need I go therefore in such fear of yo
As of my mortal danger.
Mary Stuart. On my life,
(Long life or short, with gentle or vi
lent end,
I know not, and would choose no
though I might
So take God's office on me) one tha
heard
Would swear thy speech had in it, an
subtly mixed,
A savor as of menace, or a sound
As of an imminent ill or perilous sens
Which was not in thy meaning.
Mary Beaton. No: in mine
There lurked no treason ever; nor hav
you
Cause to think worse of me than lo
ally,
If proof may be believed on witness.
Mary Stuart. Sure,
I think I have not, nor I should n
have:
Thy life has been the shadow cast
mine,
A present faith to serve my present nee
A foot behind my footsteps; as lor
since
In those French dances that we tro
and laughed
The blithe way through together. Tho
couldst sing
Then, and a great while gone it is
this
Since I heard song or music: I cou
now
Find in my heart to bid thee, as t
Jews
Were once bid sing in their captivity
One of their songs of Sion, sing me no
If one thou knowest, for love of th
far time,
One of our songs of Paris.
Mary Beaton. Give me leave
A little to cast up some wanderi
words,
And gather back such memories as m
beat

bout my mind of such a song, and yet
think I might renew some note long
dumb
at once your ear allowed of. — I did
pray, [*Aside.*
mpt me not, God: and by her mouth
again
e tempts me — nay, but prompts me,
being most just,
know by trial if all remembrance be
ad as remorse or pity that in birth
ed, and were childless in her: if she
quite
rget that very swan-song of thy love,
love that wast, my love that wouldst
not be,
t God forget her now at last as I
member: if she think but one soft
thought,
st one poor word upon thee, God
thereby
all surely bid me let her live: if none,
hoot that letter home, and sting her
dead.
d strengthen me to sing but these
words through,
ough I fall dumb at end forever.
Now — [*She sings.*

rès tant de jours, après tant de pleurs,
ez secourable à mon âme en peine.
yez comme Avril fait l'amour aux
fleurs;
me d'amour, dame aux belles couleurs,
eu vous a fait belle, Amour vous fait
reine.

ons, je t'en prie; aimons, je le veux.
temps fuit et rit et ne revient guère
ur baiser le bout de tes blonds cheveux,
ur baiser tes cils, ta bouche et tes yeux;
mour n'a qu'un jour auprès de sa mère.

Mary Stuart. Nay, I should once
have known that song, thou
say'st,
d him that sang it and should now be
dead:
as it — but his rang sweeter — was it
not
my Belleau?
Mary Beaton (My letter — here at
heart!) [*Aside.*

I think it might be — were it better writ
And courtlier phrased, with Latin spice
cast in,
And a more tunable descant.
Mary Stuart. Ay; how sweet
Sang all the world about those stars
that sang
With Ronsard for the strong mid star
of all,
His bay-bound head all glorious with
gray hairs,
Who sang my birth and bridal! When
I think
Of those French years, I only seem to
see
A light of swords and singing, only hear
Laughter of love and lovely stress of
lutes,
And in between the passion of them
borne
Sound of swords crossing ever, as of
feet
Dancing, and life and death still equally
Blithe and bright-eyed from battle.
Haply now
My sometime sister, mad Queen Madge,
is grown
As grave as I should be, and wears at
waist
No hearts of last year's lovers any more
Enchased for jewels round her girdle-
stead,
But rather beads for penitence; yet I
doubt
Time should not more abash her heart
than mine,
Who live not heartless yet. These
days like those
Have power but for a season given to
do
No more upon our spirits than they may,
And what they may we know not till it
be
Done, and we need no more take thought
of it,
As I no more of death or life to-day.
Mary Beaton. That shall you surely
need not.
Mary Stuart. So I think,
Our keepers being departed; and by
these,
Even by the uncourtlier as the gentler
man,

I read as in a glass their queen's plain heart,
And that by her at last I shall not die.

SCENE III. — GREENWICH PALACE. QUEEN ELIZABETH *and* DAVISON.

Elizabeth. Thou hast seen Lord Howard? I bade him send thee.
Davison. Madam,
But now he came upon me hard at hand,
And by your gracious message bade me in.
Elizabeth. The day is fair as April: hast thou been
Abroad this morning? 'Tis no winter's sun
That makes these trees forget their nakedness,
And all the glittering ground, as 'twere in hope,
Breathe laughingly.
Davison. Indeed, the gracious air
Had drawn me forth into the park, and thence
Comes my best speed to attend upon your grace.
Elizabeth. My grace is not so gracious as the sun
That graces thus the late distempered air;
And you should oftener use to walk abroad,
Sir, than your custom is: I would not have
Good servants heedless of their natural health
To do me sickly service. It were strange
That one twice bound as woman and as queen
To care for good men's lives and loyalties
Should prove herself toward either dangerous.
Davison. That
Can be no part of any servant's fear
Who lives for service of your majesty.
Elizabeth. I would not have it be, — God else forbid! —
Who have so loyal servants as I hold
All now that bide about me; for I will not
Think, though such villany once were in men's minds,
That twice among mine English gentlemen
Shall hearts be found so foul as theirs who thought,
When I was horsed for hunting, to way-lay
And shoot me through the back a- unawares
With poisoned bullets; nor, thou knowest, would I,
When this was opened to me, take such care,
Ride so fenced round about with iron guard,
Or walk so warily as men counselled me
For loyal fear of what thereafter might
More prosperously be plotted: nay God knows,
I would not hold on such poor terms my life,
With such a charge upon it, as to breathe
In dread of death or treason till the day
That they should stop my trembling breath, and ease
The piteous heart that panted like a slave's
Of all vile fear forever. So to live
Were so much hatefuller than thus to die,
I do not think that man or woman draws
Base breath of life the loathsomest on earth
Who by such purchase of perpetual fear
And deathless doubt of all in trust of none
Would shudderingly prolong it.
Davison. Even too well
Your servants know that greatness of your heart
Which gives you yet unguarded to men's eyes;
And were unworthier found to serve or live
Than is the unworthiest of them, did not this
Make all their own hearts hotter with desire
To be the bulwark or the price of your
Paid to redeem it from the arrest of death.

Elizabeth. So haply should they be
whose hearts beat true
ith loyal blood; but whoso says they
are
but a loving liar.
Davison. I trust your grace
ith in your own heart no such doubt
of them
speaks in mockery through your lips.
Elizabeth. By God,
say much less than righteous truth
might speak
their loud loves that ring with
emptiness,
d hollow-throated loyalties whose
heart
wind and clamorous promise. Ye
desire, —
th all your souls ye swear that ye
desire, —
e queen of Scots were happily re-
moved,
d not a knave that loves me will put
hand
the enterprise ye look for only of me
o only would forbear it.
Davison. If your grace
minded yet it shall be done at all,
e way that were most honorable and
just
ere safest, sure, and best.
Elizabeth. I dreamt last night
r murderess there in hold had tasted
death
execution of the sentence done
at was pronounced upon her; and the
news
stung my heart with wrath to hear
of it
at had I had a sword, — look to't,
and 'ware! —
ad thrust it through thy body.
Davison. God defend!
vas well I came not in your highness'
way
ile the hot mood was on you. But
indeed
ould know soothly if your mind be
changed
m its late root of purpose.
Elizabeth. No, by God;
I were fain it could be somewise
done,
And leave the blame not on me. And
so much,
If there were love and honesty in one
Whom I held faithful and exact of care,
Should easily be performed; but here
I find
This dainty fellow so precise a knave
As will take all things dangerous on his
tongue,
And nothing on his hand: hot-mouthed
and large
In zeal to stuff mine ears with promises,
But perjurous in performance: did he
not
Set hand among you to the bond where-
by
He is bound at utmost hazard of his
life
To do me such a service? yet I could
Have wrought as well without him, had
I wist
Of this faint falsehood in his heart.
There is
That Wingfield whom thou wot'st of,
would have done
With glad good-will what I required of
him,
And made no Puritan mouths on't.
Davison. Madam, yet
Far better were it all should but be
done
By line of law and judgment.
Elizabeth. There be men
Wiser than thou that see this otherwise.
Davison. All is not wisdom that of
wise men comes,
Nor are all eyes that search the ways
of state
Clear as a just man's conscience.
Elizabeth. Proverbs! ha?
Who made thee master of these sen-
tences,
Prime tongue of ethics and philosophy?
Davison. An honest heart to serve
your majesty;
Naught else nor subtler in its reach of
wit
Than very simpleness of meaning.
Elizabeth. Nay,
I do believe thee; heartily I do.
Did my lord admiral not desire thee
bring
The warrant for her execution?

Davison. Ay,
Madam; here is it.
Elizabeth. I would it might not be,—
Or being so just were yet not necessary.
Art thou not heartily sorry — wouldst thou not,
I say, be sad — to see me sign it?
Davison. Madam,
I grieve at any soul's mishap that lives,
And specially for shipwreck of a life
To you so near allied; but seeing this doom
Wrung forth from justice by necessity,
I had rather guilt should bleed than innocence.
Elizabeth. When I shall sign, take thou this instantly
To the lord chancellor: see it straight be sealed
As quietly as he may, not saying a word,
That no man come to know it untimely: then
Send it to the earls of Kent and Shrewsbury,
Who are here set down to see this justice done:
I would no more be troubled with this coil
Till all be through. But, for the place of doom,
The hall there of the castle, in my mind,
Were fitter than the court or open green.
And as thou goest betake thee on thy way
To Walsingham, where he lies sick at home,
And let him know what hath of us been done:
Whereof the grief, I fear me, shall go near
To kill his heart outright.
Davison. Your majesty
Hath yet not signed the warrant.
Elizabeth. Ha! God's blood!
Art thou from tutor of philosophy late
Grown counsellor too, and more than counsellor, thou
To appoint me where and what this hand of mine
Shall at thy beck obsequiously subscribe
And follow on thy finger? By God's death,
What if it please me now not sign at all?
This letter of my kinswoman's last writ
Hath more compulsion in it, and more power
To enforce my pity, than a thousand tongues
Dictating death against her in mine ear
Of mine own vassal subjects. Her but now
She writes me she thanks God with all her heart
That it hath pleased him by the meanest of me
To make an end of her life's pilgrimage,
Which hath been weary to her; and doth not ask
To see its length drawn longer, having had
Too much experience of its bitterness
But only doth entreat me, since she may
Look for no favor at their zealous hands
Who are first in councils of my ministry,
That only I myself will grant her prayers;
Whereof the first is, since she cannot hope
For English burial with such Catholic rites
As here were used in time of the ancient kings,
Mine ancestors and hers, and since the tombs
Lie violated in Scotland of her sires,
That so soon ever as her enemies
Shall with her innocent blood be sated,
Her body by her servants may be borne
To some ground consecrated, there to be
Interred: and rather, she desires, France,

Where sleep her honored mother's ashes; so
At length may her poor body find the rest
Which living it has never known: thereto,
She prays me, from the fears she hath of those
To whose harsh hand I have abandoned her,
She may not secretly be done to death,
But in her servants' sight and others', who
May witness her obedience kept and faith
To the true Church, and guard her memory safe
From slanders haply to be blown abroad
Concerning her by mouths of enemies: last,
She asks that her attendants, who so well
And faithfully through all her miseries past
Have served her, may go freely where they please,
And lose not those small legacies of hers
Which poverty can yet bequeath to them.
This she conjures me by the blood of Christ,
Our kinship, and my grandsire's memory,
Who was her father's grandsire and a king,
And by the name of queen she bears with her
Even to the death, that I will not refuse,
And that a word in mine own hand may thus
Assure her, who will then as she hath lived
Die mine affectionate sister and prisoner. See,
Howe'er she have sinned, what heart were mine, if this
Drew no tears from me: not the meanest soul
That lives most miserable but with such words
Must needs draw down men's pity.

Davison. Sure it is,
This queen hath skill of writing: and her hand
Hath manifold eloquence with various voice
To express discourse of sirens or of snakes,
A mermaid's or a monster's, uttering best
All music or all malice. Here is come
A letter writ long since of hers to you
From Sheffield Castle, which for shame or fear
She durst not or she would not thence despatch,
Sent secretly to me from Fotheringay,
Not from her hand, but with her own hand writ,
So foul of import and malignity
I durst not for your majesty's respect
With its fierce infamies afire from hell
Offend your gracious eyesight; but because
Your justice by your mercy's ignorant hand
Hath her fair eyes put out, and walks now blind
Even by the pit's edge deathward, pardon me
If what you never should have seen be shown
By hands that rather would take fire in hand
Than lay in yours this writing.
[*Gives her a letter.*

Elizabeth. By this light,
Whate'er be here, thou hadst done presumptuously,
And Walsingham thy principal, to keep
Aught from mine eyes that being to me designed
Might even with most offence enlighten them.
Here is her hand, indeed; and she takes up
[*Reading.*
In gracious wise enough the charge imposed
By promise on her and desire of ours,
How loath soe'er she be, regretfully
To bring such things in question of discourse,
Yet with no passion but sincerity,

As God shall witness her, declares to us
What our good lady of Shrewsbury said to her
Touching ourself in terms ensuing: whereto
Answering, she chid this dame for such belief,
And reprehended for licentious tongue,
To speak so lewdly of us; which herself
Believes not, knowing the woman's natural heart
An evil will as then to us-ward. Here
She writes no more than I would well believe
Of her as of the countess. Ha!
Davison. Your grace
Shall but defile and vex your eyes and heart
To read these villanies through.
Elizabeth. God's death, man! peace:
Thou wert not best incense me toward thine own,
Whose eyes have been before me in them. What!
Was she not mad to write this? *One that had*
Your promise — lay with you times numberless —
All license and all privateness that may
Be used of wife and husband! yea, of her
And more dead men than shame remembers. *God*
Shall stand her witness — with the devil of hell
For sponsor to her vows, whose spirit in her
Begot himself this issue. Ha! the duke
— Nay, God shall give me patience — and his knave,
And Hatton — God have mercy! nay, but hate,
Hate and constraint and rage have wrecked her wits,
And continence of life cut off from lust,
— This common stale of Scotland, that has tried
The sins of three rank nations, and consumed
Their veins whose life she took not, — Italy,
France that put half this poison in her blood,
And her own kingdom that being sick therewith
Vomited out on ours the venomous thing
Whose head we set not foot on; but may God
Make my fame fouler through the world than hers,
And ranker in men's record, if I spare
The she-wolf that I saved, the woman-beast,
Wolf-woman — how the Latin rings we know,
And what lewd lair first reared her, and whose hand
Writ broad across the Louvre and Holyrood
Lupanar; but no brothel ever bred
Or breathed so rank a soul's infection, spawned
Or spat such foulness in God's face and man's,
Or festered in such falsehood as her breath
Strikes honor sick with, and the spirit of shame
Dead as her fang shall strike herself, and send
The serpent that corruption calls her soul
To vie strange venoms with the worm of hell,
And make the face of darkness and the grave
Blush hotter with the fires wherein that soul
Sinks deeper than damnation.
Davison. Let your grace
Think only that but now the thing is known
And self-discovered which too long your love
Too dangerously hath cherished; and forget
All but that end which yet remains for her,
That right by pity be not overcome.
Elizabeth. God pity so my soul as I do right,
And show me no more grace alive or dead

han I do justice here. Give me again
hat warrant I put by, being foolish: yea,
hy word spake sooth, — my soul's eyes were put out;
could not see for pity. Thou didst well —
am bounden to thee heartily — to cure
ly sight of this distemper, and my soul.
ere in God's sight I set mine hand, who thought
ever to take this thing upon it, nor
o God so bitter service. Take this hence,
nd let me see no word nor hear of her
ill the sun see not such a soul alive.

ACT V. — MARY STUART.

CENE I. — MARY'S CHAMBER IN FOTHERINGAY CASTLE.

MARY STUART *and* MARY BEATON.

Mary Stuart (*sings*).

O Lord my God,
I have trusted in thee;
O Jesu my dearest one,
Now set me free.
In prison's oppression,
In sorrow's obsession,
I weary for thee.
With sighing and crying
Bowed down as dying,
adore thee, I implore thee, set me free!

ree are the dead: yet fain I would have had
nce, before all captivity find end,
me breath of freedom living. These that come,
hink, with no such message, must not find,
r all this lameness of my limbs, a heart
maimed in me with sickness. Three years gone,
hen last I parted from the earl marshal's charge,
did not think to see his face again
rned on me as his prisoner. Now his wife
Will take no jealousy more to hear of it,
I trust, albeit we meet not as unfriends,
If it be mortal news he brings me. Go,
If I seem ready, as meseems I should,
And well arrayed to bear myself indeed
None otherwise than queenlike in their sight,
Bid them come in.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

I cannot tell at last
If it be fear or hope that should expect
Death: I have had enough of hope, and fear
Was none of my familiars while I lived
Such life as had more pleasant things to lose
Than death or life may now divide me from
'Tis not so much to look upon the sun
With eyes that may not lead us where we will,
And halt behind the footless flight of hope
With feet that may not follow; nor were aught
So much, of all things life may think to have,
That one not cowardly born should find it worth
The purchase of so base a price as this,
To stand self-shamed as coward. I do not think
This is mine end that comes upon me; but
I had liefer far it were than, were it not,
That ever I should fear it.

Enter KENT, SHREWSBURY, BEALE, *and Sheriff.*

Sirs, good day:
With such good heart as prisoners have, I bid
You and your message welcome.

Kent. Madam, this
The secretary of the council here hath charge
To read as their commission.

Mary Stuart. Let me hear
In as brief wise as may beseem the time
The purport of it.

Beale. Our commission here
Given by the council under the great seal

Pronounces on your head for present doom
Death, by this written sentence.
Mary Stuart. Ay, my lords?
May I believe this, and not hold myself
Mocked as a child with shadows? In God's name,
Speak you, my lord of Shrewsbury: let me know
If this be dream or waking.
Kent. Verily,
No dream it is, nor dreamers we that pray,
Madam, you meetly would prepare yourself
To stand before God's judgment presently.
Mary Stuart. I had rather so than ever stand again
Before the face of man's. Why speak not you,
To whom I speak, my lord earl marshal? Nay,
Look not so heavily: by my life, he stands
As one at point to weep. Why, good my lord,
To know that none may swear by Mary's life,
And hope again to find belief of man
Upon so slight a warrant, should not bring
This trouble on your eyes: look up, and say
The word you have for her that never was
Less than your friend, and prisoner.
Shrewsbury. None save this,
Which willingly I would not speak, I may:
That presently your time is come to die.
Mary Stuart. Why, then, I am well content to leave a world
Wherein I am no more serviceable at all
To God or man, and have therein so long
Endured so much affliction. All my life
I have ever earnestly desired the love
And friendship of your queen; have warned her oft
Of coming dangers; and have cherished long
The wish that I but once might speak with her
In plain-souled confidence, being well assured,
Had we but once met, there an end had been
Of jealousies between us: but our foes
With equal wrong toward either, treacherously
Have kept us still in sunder; by whose craft
And crooked policy hath my sister's crown
Fallen in great peril, and myself have been
Imprisoned, and inveterately maligned
And here must now be murdered. But I know
That only for my faith's sake I must die
And this to know for truth is recompense
As large as all my sufferings. For the crime
Wherewith I am charged, upon the holy book
I lay mine hand for witness of my plea
I am wholly ignorant of it; and solemnly
Declare that never yet conspiracy
Devised against the queen my sister life
Took instigation or assent from me.
Kent. You swear but on a popish Testament:
Such oaths are all as worthless as the book.
Mary Stuart. I swear upon the book wherein I trust:
Would you give rather credit to mine oath
Sworn on your Scriptures that I trust not in?
Kent. Madam, I fain would have you heartily
Renounce your superstition; toward which end
With us the godly dean of Peterborough,
Good Richard Fletcher, well approved for faith
Of God and of the queen, is hither come
To proffer you his prayerful ministry.

Mary Stuart. If you, my lords, or he will pray for me,
shall be thankful for your prayers; but may not
Vith theirs that hold another faith mix mine.
pray you, therefore, that mine almoner may
Iave leave to attend on me, that from his hands
having made confession, may receive he sacrament.
Kent. We may not grant you this.
Mary Stuart. I shall not see my chaplain ere I die?
ut two months gone, this grace was granted me
y word expressly from your queen, to have
gain his ministration; and at last
n the utter hour and bitter strait of death,
s this denied me?
Kent. Madam, for your soul
Iore meet it were to cast these mummeries out,
nd bear Christ only in your heart, than serve
Vith ceremonies of ritual hand and tongue
Iis mere idolatrous likeness.
Mary Stuart. This were strange,
hat I should bear him visible in my hand,
r keep with lips and knees his titular rites,
nd cast in heart no thought upon him. Nay,
ut me, I pray, to no more argument;
ut if this least thing be not granted, yet
rant me to know the season of my death.
Shrewsbury. At eight by dawn to-morrow you must die.
Mary Stuart. So shall I hardly see the sun again.
y dawn to-morrow? meanest men condemned
ive not their lives' breath up so suddenly:
owbeit, I had rather yield you thanks, who make
Such brief end of the bitterness of death
For me who have borne such bitter length of life,
Than plead with protestation of appeal
For half a piteous hour's remission; nor
Henceforward shall I be denied of man
Aught, who may never now crave aught again,
But whence is no denial. Yet shall this
Not easily be believed of men, nor find
In foreign ears acceptance, that a queen
Should be thrust out of life thus. Good my friend,
Bid my physician Gorion come to me:
I have to speak with him — sirs, with your leave —
Of certain moneys due to me in France.
What! shall I twice desire your leave, my lords,
To live these poor last hours of mine alive
At peace among my friends? I have much to do,
And little time wherein to do it is left.
Shrewsbury (*to* KENT *apart*). I pray she may not mean worse than I would
Against herself ere morning.
Kent. Let not then
This French knave's drugs come near her, nor himself:
We will take order for it.
Shrewsbury. Nay, this were but
To exasperate more her thwarted heart, and make
Despair more desperate than itself. Pray God
She be not minded to compel us put
Force at the last upon her of men's hands
To hale her violently to death, and make
Judgment look foul and fierce as murder's face
With stain of strife and passion.
[*Exeunt all but* MARY STUART *and* MARY BEATON.
Mary Stuart. So, my friend,
The last of all our Maries are you left

To-morrow. Strange has been my life, and now
Strange looks my death upon me: yet, albeit
Nor the hour nor manner of it be mine to choose,
Ours is it yet, and all men's in the world,
To make death welcome in what wise we will.
Bid you my chaplain, though he see me not,
Watch through the night, and pray for me: perchance,
When ere the sundawn they shall bring me forth,
I may behold him, and upon my knees
Receive his blessing. Let our supper be
Served earlier in than wont was: whereunto
I bid my true poor servants here, to take
Farewell, and drink at parting to them all
The cup of my last kindness, in good hope
They shall stand alway constant in their faith,
And dwell in peace together: thereupon
What little store is left me will I share
Among them, and between my girls divide
My wardrobe and my jewels severally,
Reserving but the black robe and the red
That shall attire me for my death; and last
With mine own hand shall be my will writ out,
And all memorials more set down therein
That I would leave for legacies of love
To my next kinsmen and my household folk.
And to the king my brother yet of France
Must I write briefly, but a word to say
I am innocent of the charge whereon I die
Now for my right's sake claimed upon this crown,
And our true faith's sake, but am barred from sight
Even of mine almoner here, though hard at hand;
And I would bid him take upon his charge
The keeping of my servants, as I think
He shall not for compassionate shame refuse,
Albeit his life be softer than his heart;
And in religion for a queen's soul pray
That once was styled Most Christian, and is now
In the true faith about to die, deprived
Of all her past possessions. But this most
And first behooves it, that the king of Spain
By Gorion's word of mouth receive my heart,
Who soon shall stand before him. Bid the leech
Come hither, and alone, to speak with me.

[*Exit* MARY BEATON.

She is dumb as death: yet never in her life
Hath she been quick of tongue. For all the rest,
Poor souls, how well they love me, all as well
I think I know; and one of them or twain
At least may surely see me to my death
Ere twice the hours have changed again. Perchance
Love that can weep not would the gladlier die
For those it cannot weep on. Time wears thin:
They should not now play laggard: nay, he comes,
The last that ever speaks alone with me
Before my soul shall speak alone with God.

Enter GORION.

I have sent once more for you to no such end
As sick men for physicians: no strong drug
May put the death next morning twelve hours back

Whose twilight overshadows me, that am
Nor sick nor medicinable. Let me know
If I may lay the last of all my trust
On you that ever shall be laid on man
To prove him kind and loyal.
Gorion. So may God
Deal with me, madam, as I prove to you
Faithful, though none but I were in the world
That you might trust beside.
Mary Stuart. With equal heart
Do I believe and thank you. I would send
To Paris for the ambassador from Spain
This letter with two diamonds, which your craft
For me must cover from men's thievish eyes,
Where they may be not looked for.
Gorion. Easily
Within some molten drug may these be hid,
And faithfully by me conveyed to him.
Mary Stuart. The lesser of them shall he keep in sign
Of my good friendship toward himself: but this
A token to King Philip shall he give
That for the truth I die, and dying commend
To him my friends and servants, Gilbert Curle,
His sister, and Jane Kennedy, who shall
To-night watch by me; and my ladies all
That have endured my prison: let him not
Forget from his good favor one of these
That I remember to him; Charles Arundel,
And either banished Paget; one whose heart
Was better toward my service than his hand,
Morgan; and of mine exiles for their faith,
The prelates first of Glasgow and of Ross;
And Liggons and Throgmorton, that have lost
For me their leave to live on English earth;
And Westmoreland, that lives now more forlorn
Than died that earl who rose for me with him.
These I beseech him favor for my sake
Still: and forget not, if he come again
To rule as king in England, one of them
That were mine enemies here: the treasurer first,
And Leicester, Walsingham, and Huntingdon,
At Tutbury once my foe, fifteen years gone,
And Wade that spied upon me three years since,
And Paulet here my gaoler: set them down
For him to wreak wrath's utmost justice on,
In my revenge remembered. Though I be
Dead, let him not forsake his hope to reign
Upon this people: with my last breath left
I make this last prayer to him, that not the less
He will maintain the invasion yet designed
Of us before on England: let him think,
It is God's quarrel, and on earth a cause
Well worthy of his greatness; which being won,
Let him forget no man of these nor me.
And now will I lie down, that four hours' sleep
May give me strength before I sleep again,
And need take never thought for waking more.

SCENE II. — THE PRESENCE CHAMBER.

SHREWSBURY, KENT, PAULET, DRURY, MELVILLE, *and Attendants.*

Kent. The stroke is past of eight.
Shrewsbury. Not far, my lord.

Kent. What stays the provost and the sheriff yet
That went ere this to bring the prisoner forth?
What! are her doors locked inwards? Then perchance
Our last night's auguries of some close design
By death contrived of her self-slaughterous hand
To baffle death by justice hit but right
The heart of her bad purpose.
Shrewsbury. Fear it not:
See where she comes, a queenlier thing to see
Than whom such thoughts take hold on.
Enter MARY STUART, *led by two gentlemen and preceded by the Sheriff;* MARY BEATON, BARBARA MOWBRAY, *and other ladies behind, who remain in the doorway.*
Melville (*kneeling to* MARY). Woe am I,
Madam, that I must bear to Scotland back
Such tidings watered with such tears as these!
Mary Stuart. Weep not, good Melville: rather should your heart
Rejoice that here an end is come at last
Of Mary Stuart's long sorrows; for be sure
That all this world is only vanity.
And this record I pray you make of me,
That a true woman to my faith I die,
And true to Scotland and to France; but God
Forgive them that have long desired mine end,
And with false tongues have thirsted for my blood
As the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks.
O God, who art truth, and the author of all truth,
Thou knowest the extreme recesses of my heart,
And how that I was willing all my days
That England should with Scotland be fast friends.
Commend me to my son: tell him that I
Have nothing done to prejudice hi rights
As king. And now, good Melville, far thee well.
My lord of Kent, whence comes it tha your charge
Hath bidden back my women there a door
Who fain to the end would bear m company?
Kent. Madam, this were not seeml nor discreet,
That these should so have leave to ve men's ears
With cries and loose lamentings: hapl too
They might in superstition seek to dip
Their handkerchiefs for relics in you blood.
Mary Stuart. That will I pledge m word they shall not. Nay,
The queen would surely not deny m this,
The poor last thing that I shall ask o earth.
Even a far meaner person dying, think,
She would not have so handled. Si you know
I am her cousin, of her grandsire' blood,
A queen of France by marriage, and b birth
Anointed queen of Scotland. My poo girls
Desire no more than but to see m die.
Shrewsbury. Madam, you have leav to elect of this your train
Two ladies with four men to go wit you.
Mary Stuart. I choose from fort my Scottish following here
Jane Kennedy, with Elspeth Curle: men,
Bourgoin and Gorion shall attend c me,
Gervais and Didier.—Come then, l us go.
[*Exeunt: manent* MARY BEATON a BARBARA MOWBRAY.
Barbara. I wist I was not worth though my child

It is that her own hands made Christian: but
I deemed she should have bid you go with her.
Alas! and would not all we die with her?
Mary Beaton. Why, from the gallery here at hand your eyes
May go with her along the hall beneath
Even to the scaffold; and I fain would hear
What fain I would not look on. Pray you, then,
If you may bear to see it as those below,
Do me that sad good service of your eyes
For mine to look upon it, and declare
All that till all be done I will not see:
I pray you of your pity.
Barbara. Though mine heart
Break, it shall not for fear forsake the sight
That may be faithful yet in following her,
Nor yet for grief refuse your prayer, being fain
To give your love such bitter comfort, who
So long have never left her.
Mary Beaton. Till she die —
I have ever known I shall not till she die.
See you yet aught? if I hear spoken words,
My heart can better bear these pulses, else
Unbearable, that rend it.
Barbara. Yea, I see
Stand in mid hall the scaffold, black as death,
And black the block upon it; all around,
Against the throng a guard of halberdiers;
And the axe against the scaffold-rail reclined,
And two men masked on either hand beyond;
And hard behind the block a cushion set,
Black, as the chair behind it.
Mary Beaton. When I saw
Fallen on a scaffold once a young man's head,
Such things as these I saw not. Nay, but on:
I knew not that I spake; and toward your ears
Indeed I spake not.
Barbara. All those faces change;
She comes more royally than ever yet
Fell foot of man triumphant on this earth,
Imperial more than empire made her, born
Enthroned as queen sat never. Not a line
Stirs of her sovereign feature: like a bride
Brought home she mounts the scaffold; and her eyes
Sweep regal round the cirque beneath, and rest,
Subsiding with a smile. She sits, and they,
The doomsmen earls, beside her; at her left
The sheriff, and the clerk at hand on high,
To read the warrant.
Mary Beaton. None stands there but knows
What things therein are writ against her: God
Knows what therein is writ not. God forgive
All!
Barbara. Not a face there breathes of all the throng
But is more moved than hers to hear this read,
Whose look alone is changed not.
Mary Beaton. Once I knew
A face that changed not in as dire an hour,
More than the queen's face changes. Hath he not
Ended?
Barbara. You cannot hear them speak below:
Come near, and hearken; bid not me repeat
All.
Mary Beaton. I beseech you — for I may not come.

Barbara. Now speaks Lord Shrewsbury but a word or twain;
And brieflier yet she answers, and stands up
As though to kneel, and pray.
Mary Beaton. I too have prayed:
God hear at last her prayers not less than mine,
Which failed not, sure, of hearing.
Barbara. Now draws nigh
That heretic priest, and bows himself, and thrice
Strives, as a man that sleeps in pain, to speak,
Stammering: she waves him by, as one whose prayers
She knows may naught avail her; now she kneels,
And the earls rebuke her, and she answers not,
Kneeling. O Christ, whose likeness there engraved
She strikes against her bosom, hear her! Now
That priest lifts up his voice against her prayer,
Praying; and a voice all round goes up with his:
But hers is lift up higher than climbs their cry,
In the great psalms of penitence; and now
She prays aloud in English; for the Pope
Our father, and his Church; and for her son,
And for the queen her murderess; and that God
May turn from England yet his wrath away;
And so forgives her enemies; and implores
High intercession of the saints with Christ,
Whom crucified she kisses on his cross,
And crossing now her breast — ah, heard you not?
Even as thine arms were spread upon the cross,
So make thy grace, O Jesus, wide for me,
Receive me to thy mercy so, and so
Forgive my sins.

Mary Beaton. So be it, if so God please.
Is she not risen up yet?
Barbara. Yea, but mine eyes
Darken: because those deadly twain close masked
Draw nigh as men that crave forgiveness, which
Gently she grants; *For now*, she said, *I hope*
You shall end all my troubles. Now meseems
They would put hand upon her as to help,
And disarray her raiment; but she smiles —
Heard you not that? can you nor hear nor speak,
Poor heart, for pain? *Truly*, she said, *my lords,*
I never had such chamber-grooms before
As these to wait on me.
Mary Beaton. An end, an end!
Barbara. Now come those twain upon the scaffold up
Whom she preferred before us; and she lays
Her crucifix down, which now the headsman takes
Into his cursed hand, but being rebuked
Puts back for shame that sacred spoil of hers.
And now they lift her veil up from her head
Softly, and softly draw the black robe off,
And all in red as of a funeral flame
She stands up statelier yet before them tall
And clothed as if with sunset; and she takes
From Elspeth's hand the crimson sleeves, and draws
Their covering on her arms: and now those twain
Burst out aloud in weeping; and she speaks —
Weep not: I promised for you. Now she kneels;
And Jane binds round a kerchief on her eyes;
And smiling last her heavenliest smile on earth,

She waves a blind hand toward them, with *Farewell*,
Farewell, to meet again; and they come down,
And leave her praying aloud, *In thee, O Lord,*
I put my trust. And now, that psalm being through,
She lays between the block and her soft neck
Her long white peerless hands up tenderly,
Which now the headsman draws again away,
But softly too. Now stir her lips again —
Into thine hands, O Lord, into thine hands,
Lord, I commend my spirit. And now — But now,
Look you, not I, the last upon her.
Mary Beaton. Ha!
He strikes awry: she stirs not. Nay, but now
He strikes aright, and ends it.
Barbara. Hark, a cry!
Voice below. So perish all found enemies of the queen!
Another Voice. Amen!
Mary Beaton. I heard that very cry go up
Far off long since to God, who answers here.

POEMS AND BALLADS.

A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs: she will not hear;
Let us go hence together without fear.
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her:
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part: she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam. What help is there?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence: she will not weep.
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and reap."
All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow:
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest: she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep;
And, though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

Let us give up, go down: she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair, —
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence: she will not see.
Sing all once more together; surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.

ITYLUS.

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft, light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget, and death remember,
Till thou remember, and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring;
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember,
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry, or I would follow,
Could I forget, or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember, and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth, among sea-gulfs hollow,
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet,
Who hath remembered me? Who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to be,
What have the gods done with us? what with me,
What with my love? They have shown me fates and fears,
Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer than the sea,
Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that veers,
These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they done well?
But who shall answer for her? who shall tell
Sweet things or sad, such things as no man hears?
May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
From eyes more dear to me than starriest spheres
These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
Those eyelids folded like a white-rose leaf,
Deep double shells wherethrough the eye-flower peers,
Let them weep once more only, sweet and brief,
Brief tears and bright, for one who gave her tears
These many years.

A LITANY.

ἐν οὐρανῷ φαεννὰς
κρύψω παρ' ὑμὶν αὐγὰς,
μίας πρὸ νυκτὸς ἑπτὰ νύκτας ἔξετε, κ.τ.λ.
Anth. Sac.

FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven
I will make dark over thee;
One night shall be as seven,
That its skirts may cover thee;
I will send on thy strong men a sword,
On thy remnant a rod:
Ye shall know that I am the Lord,
Saith the Lord God.

SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven
Thou hast made dark over us;
One night has been as seven,
That its skirt might cover us;
Thou hast sent on our strong men a sword,
On our remnant a rod:
We know that thou art the Lord,
O Lord our God!

THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the tresses and wings of the wind
Are scattered and shaken,
I will scatter all them that have sinned:
There shall none be taken;
As a sower that scattereth seed,
So will I scatter them;
As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
I will break and shatter them.

FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind
Are scattered and shaken,
Thou hast scattered all them that have sinned:
There was no man taken;
As a sower that scattereth seed,
So hast thou scattered us;
As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,
Thou hast broken and shattered us.

FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee,
I God will sunder thee;
I will make darkness above thee,
And thick darkness under thee;
Before me goeth a light,
Behind me a sword:
Shall a remnant find grace in my sight?
I am the Lord.

SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us,
Thou God didst sunder us;
Thou madest darkness above us,
And thick darkness under us;
Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,
And made ready thy sword:
Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,
We beseech thee, O Lord!

SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment
For sins on this wise?
For the glittering of raiment,
And the shining of eyes,
For the painting of faces,
And the sundering of trust,
For the sins of thine high places
And delight of thy lust?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,
Lamentation for song;
For, behold, I God am holy,
I the Lord am strong.
Ye shall seek me, and shall not reach me
Till the wine-press be trod;
In that hour ye shall turn, and beseech me,
Saith the Lord God.

EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,
But with coin of sighs,
But with rending of raiment,
And with weeping of eyes,
But with shame of stricken faces,
And with strewing of dust,
For the sin of stately places
And lordship of lust;

With voices of men made lowly,
Made empty of song,
O Lord God most holy,
O God most strong,
We reach out hands to reach thee
Ere the wine-press be trod;
We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee,
O Lord our God!

NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,
Come down and cover us;
To the cloud on thy left and thy right,
Be thou spread over us.
A snare shall be as thy mother,
And a curse thy bride;
Thou shalt put her away, and another
Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day,
Nor lie down by night.
Would God it were dark! thou shalt say;
Would God it were light!
And the sight of thine eyes shall be made
As the burning of fire;
And thy soul shall be sorely afraid
For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your lords loved well,
Putting silver and gold on you,
The inevitable hell
Shall surely take hold on you;
Your gold shall be for a token,
Your staff for a rod;
With the breaking of bands ye are broken,
Saith the Lord God.

TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,
Fall down and cover us;
To the darkness at left and at right,
Be thou shed over us.
We had breaking of spirit to mother,
And cursing to bride;
And one was slain, and another
Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,
Nor lie down by night;
Thy sword was sharp in our way,
Thy word in our sight;
The delight of our eyelids was made
As the burning of fire,
And our souls became sorely afraid
For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,
Laying silver and gold on us,
The kingdom of death and of hell
Riseth up to take hold on us;
Our gold is turned to a token,
Our staff to a rod:
Yet shalt thou bind them up that were broken,
O Lord our God!

A LAMENTATION.

I.

WHO hath known the ways of time,
Or trodden behind his feet?
There is no such man among men.
For chance overcomes him, or crime
Changes; for all things sweet
In time wax bitter again.
Who shall give sorrow enough,
Or who the abundance of tears?
Mine eyes are heavy with love,
And a sword gone thorough mine ears,
A sound like a sword and fire,
For pity, for great desire;
Who shall insure me thereof,
Lest I die, being full of my fears?

Who hath known the ways and the wrath,
The sleepless spirit, the root
And blossom of evil will,
The divine device of a god?
Who shall behold it, or hath?
The twice-tongued prophets are mute,
The many speakers are still;
No foot has travelled or trod,
No hand has meted, his path.
Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,
And the mighty gods have their fill
And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,
Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.
Keen after heat is the cold,
Sore after summer is rain,
And melteth man to the bone.
As water he weareth away,
As a flower, as an hour in a day,
Fallen from laughter to moan.
But my spirit is shaken with fear
Lest an evil thing begin,
New-born, a spear for a spear,
And one for another sin.
Or ever our tears began,
It was known from of old and said;
One law for a living man,
And another law for the dead.
For these are fearful and sad,
Vain, and things without breath;
While he lives let a man be glad,
For none hath joy of his death.

II.

Who hath known the pain, the old pain
of earth,
Or all the travail of the sea,
The many ways and waves, the birth
Fruitless, the labor nothing worth?
Who hath known, who knoweth, C
gods? not we.

There is none shall say he hath seen,
There is none he hath known.
Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I
been,
I have reaped and sown;
I have seen the desire of mine eyes,
The beginning of love,
The season of kisses and sighs,
And the end thereof.
I have known the ways of the sea,
All the perilous ways;
Strange winds have spoken with me,
And the tongues of strange days.
I have hewn the pine for ships;
Where steeds run arow,
I have seen from their bridled lips
Foam blown as the snow.
With snapping of chariot-poles
And with straining of oars
I have grazed in the race the goals,
In the storm the shores;
As a greave is cleft with an arrow
At the joint of the knee,
I have cleft through the sea-straits
narrow
To the heart of the sea.
When air was smitten in sunder,
I have watched on high
The ways of the stars and the thun
der
In the night of the sky;
Where the dark brings forth light as a
flower,
As from lips that dissever;
One abideth the space of an hour,
One endureth forever.
Lo, what hath he seen or known
Of the way and the wave
Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,
From the breast to the grave?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,
Grief was born, and the kinless night

Mother of gods without form or name.
And light is born out of heaven, and dies,
And one day knows not another's light;
But night is one, and her shape the same.
But dumb the goddesses underground
Wait, and we hear not on earth if their feet
Rise, and the night wax loud with their wings;
Dumb, without word or shadow of sound;
And sift in scales, and winnow as wheat
Men's souls, and sorrow of manifold things.

III.

Nor less of grief than ours
The gods wrought long ago
To bruise men one by one;
But with the incessant hours
Fresh grief and greener woe
Spring, as the sudden sun
Year after year makes flowers;
And these die down and grow,
And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept
The old heroes in time fled,
No dream-divided sleep;
And holier eyes have wept
Than ours, when on her dead
Gods have seen Thetis weep,
With heavenly hair far-swept
Back, heavenly hands out-spread
Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,
One night; and like as these
White ashes of no weight,
Held not his urn the cold
Ashes of Heracles?
For all things born, one gate
Opens, — no gate of gold;
Opens; and no man sees
Beyond the gods and fate.

ANIMA ANCEPS.

Till death have broken
Sweet life's love-token,
Till all be spoken
That shall be said,
What dost thou praying,
O soul, and playing
With song and saying,
Things flown and fled?
For this we know not —
That fresh springs flow not
And fresh griefs grow not
When men are dead;
When strange years cover
Lover and lover,
And joys are over,
And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow
Mar the day's morrow;
If man's life borrow,
And man's death pay;
If souls once taken,
If lives once shaken,
Arise, awaken,
By night, by day, —
Why with strong crying
And years of sighing,
Living and dying,
Fast ye and pray?
For all your weeping,
Waking and sleeping,
Death comes to reaping,
And takes away.
Though time rend after
Roof-tree from rafter,
A little laughter
Is much more worth
Than thus to measure
The hour, the treasure,
The pain, the pleasure,
The death, the birth;
Grief, when days alter,
Like joy shall falter;
Song-book and psalter,
Mourning and mirth.
Live like the swallow;
Seek not to follow,
Where earth is hollow,
Under the earth.

SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795.

SWEET mother, in a minute's span
Death parts thee and my love of thee:
Sweet love, that yet art living man,
Come back, true love, to comfort me.
Back, ah, come back! ah, wellaway!
But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,
Break to full flower, and sweeten spring,
My soul would break to a glorious rose
In such wise at his whispering.
In vain I listen; wellaway!
My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love
On the low place where I am lain,
I pray you, having wept enough,
Tell him for whom I bore such pain
That he was yet, ah! wellaway!
My true love to my dying day.

ROCOCO.

TAKE hands, and part with laughter;
Touch lips, and part with tears;
Once more and no more after,
Whatever comes with years.
We twain shall not re-measure
The ways that left us twain,
Nor crush the lees of pleasure
From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
What will the mad gods do
For hate with me, I wonder,
Or what for love with you?
Forget them till November,
And dream there's April yet;
Forget that I remember,
And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,
And kissed away his breath;
But what should we do weeping,
Though light love sleep to death?
We have drained his lips at leisure,
Till there's not left to drain
A single sob of pleasure,
A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
Might quicken if they would;
Say that the soul is deathless;
Dream that the gods are good;
Say March may wed September,
And time divorce regret:
But not that you remember,
And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
What love scarce lives and hears;
We have seen on fervent faces
The pallor of strange tears;
We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,
Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
Foams round the feet of pleasure
The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover,
And time bring back to time
The name of your first lover,
The ring of my first rhyme;
But rose-leaves of December
The frosts of June shall fret,
The day that you remember,
The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
In heaven, we twain have known
The grief of cruel kisses,
The joy whose mouth makes moan;
The pulse's pause and measure,
Where in one furtive vein
Throbs through the heart of pleasure
The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons,
And love for treason's sake;
Room for the swift new seasons,
The years that burn and break.
Dismantle and dismember
Men's days and dreams, Juliette;
For love may not remember,
But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
Time withers him at root;
Bring all dead things and dying,
Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,

Where, crushed by three days' pressure,
Our three days' love lies slain;
And earlier leaf of pleasure,
And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
It may be flame will leap;
Unclose the soft close lashes,
Lift up the lids, and weep.
Light love's extinguished ember,
Let one tear leave it wet,
For one that you remember,
And ten that you forget.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

The burden of fair women. Vain delight,
And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
And sorrowful old age that comes by night
As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them gray,
And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
And grief that says what pleasure used to say:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
A burden without fruit in childbearing;
Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
Threescore between the dawn and evening.
The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
Cover thy head, and weep; for verily
These market-men that buy thy white and brown
In the last days shall take no thought for thee;
In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
And say at night, "Would God the day were here!"
And say at dawn, "Would God the day were dead!"
With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see
Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green;
And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
And thou shalt say of mercy, "It hath been;"
And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
And talking, tears shall take thy breath between:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
How one was dear, and one desirable,

And sweet was life to hear and sweet
to smell;
But now with lights reverse the old
hours retire,
And the last hour is shod with fire
from hell:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in
spring,
White rain and wind among the ten-
der trees;
A summer of green sorrows gather-
ing;
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set towards the year,
that sees
The charred ash drop out of the drop-
ping pyre,
And winter wan with many mala-
dies;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of
hands,
Changed in the changing of the dark
and light,
They walk and weep about the bar-
ren lands
Where no seed is, nor any garner
stands,
Where in short breaths the doubtful
days respire,
And time's turned glass lets through
the sighing sands:
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life
and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy de-
light;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews
dust,
And overhead strange weathers burn
and bite;
And where the red was, lo the blood-
less white;
And where truth was, the likeness of a
liar;
And where day was, the likeness of
the night:
This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quic
eneth,
Heed well this rhyme before yo
pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is deat
This is the end of every man's desir

BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE

INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.

I.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows,
Grow not as this face grows fro
pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, who
loves are light?

Soft snows, that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite,
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, a
warm day night.

II.

"Come snow, come wind or thunder
High up in air,
I watch my face, and wonder
At my bright hair;
Naught else exalts or grieves
The rose at heart, that heaves
With love of her own leaves and li
that pair.

"She knows not loves that kissed her
She knows not where:
Art thou the ghost, my sister,
White sister there,
Am I the ghost, who knows?
My hand, a fallen rose,
Lies snow-white on white snows, and takes no care.

"I cannot see what pleasures
Or what pains were;
What pale new loves and treasures
New years will bear;
What beam will fall, what shower,
What grief or joy for dower:
But one thing knows the flower, — the flower is fair."

III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die;
Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
Draw down, draw nigh;
And wings of swift spent hours
Take flight and fly;
She sees by formless gleams,
She hears across cold streams,
Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,
With sleepless eye
She sees old loves that drifted,
She knew not why, —
Old loves and faded fears
Float down a stream that hears
The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.

IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free, —
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year;

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if any thing endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now:
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot

Move thee no more; but love at least,
And reverent heart,
May move thee, royal and released,
Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name,
As morning-star with evening-star,
His faultless fame.

A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER. 1852.

Push hard across the sand,
For the salt wind gathers breath;
Shoulder and wrist and hand,
Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,
The foam-heads loosen and flee;
It swells and welters and swings,
The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff
The long corn flickers and shakes;
Push, for the wind holds stiff,
And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,
The quiver and beat of the sea!
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,
Out with her over the sand,
Let the kings keep the earth for their share!
We have done with the sharers of land.

They have tied the world in a tether,
They have bought over God with a fee;
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,
The thief's mouth red from the feast,
The blood on the hands of the king,
And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,
Put a bit in the jaws of the sea?
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind!
The old red shall be floated again
When the ranks that are thin shall be thinned,
When the names that were twenty are ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered,
And the galley-bench creaks with a Pope,
We shall see Buonaparte the bastard
Kick heels with his throat in a rope.

While the shepherd sets wolves on his sheep,
And the emperor halters his kine,
While Shame is a watchman asleep,
And Faith is a keeper of swine, —

Let the wind shake our flag like a feather,
Like the plumes of the foam of the sea!
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,
From Cayenne to the Austrian whips;
Forth, with the rain in our hair
And the salt sweet foam in our lips;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,
In the blown wet face of the sea;
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLUTION. 1860.

The heart of the rulers is sick, and the high-priest covers his head,
For this is the song of the quick that is heard in the ears of the dead.

The poor and the halt and the blind are keen and mighty and fleet:
Like the noise of the blowing of wind is the sound of the noise of their feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in the clamor of days and of deeds:
The priests are scattered like chaff, and the rulers broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with his raiment bloodily dashed;
The thief with branded palms, and the liar with cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly, they are pained for their pleasant things:
For the house of the priests made stately, and the might in the mouth of the kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid; they are taken, they shall not flee:
For the heart of the nations is made as the strength of the springs of the sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they walked with delicate feet;
They were clothed with the cunning of old, and the smell of their garments was sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair they halt as a man made lame:
They are utterly naked and bare; their mouths are bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king that wast found most wise?
Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose mouth is emptied of lies?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till his hook be found in thy sides?
Wilt thou put back the time of the sea, or the place of the season of tides?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before God with a word in thy mouth:
That "the rain shall return in the land, and the tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their strength is unbound and undone:
They wait for a sign of a token; they cry, and there cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of them filleth the land:
There is shame in the sight of their face, there is fear in the thews of their hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a curse for the girdle thereon:
For the noise of the rending of chains, the face of their color is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men, they are grievously stricken at heart:
They are smitten asunder with pain, their bones are smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole; their lips gape open for breath:
They are clothed with sickness of soul, and the shape of the shadow of death.

The wind is thwart in their feet; it is full of the shouting of mirth;
As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so it shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen; the iron has opened its mouth;
The corn is red that was green; it is bound for the sheaves of the south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound of the wind as a breath,
In the ears of the souls that were dead, in the dust of the deepness of death;

Where the face of the moon is taken,
the ways of the stars undone,
The light of the whole sky shaken, the
light of the face of the sun;

Where the waters are emptied and bro-
ken, the waves of the waters are
stayed;
Where God has bound for a token the
darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hid-
den, and dust had grown in its
side,
A word came forth that was bidden, the
crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall
be bare, and its mouth shall be
red,
For the breath of the face of the Lord
that is felt in the bones of the
dead.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

In the fair days when god
By man as godlike trod,
And each alike was Greek, alike was
free,
God's lightning spared, they said,
Alone the happier head
Whose laurels screened it; fruitless
grace for thee
To whom the high gods gave of right
Their thunders and their laurels and
their light.

Sunbeams and bays before
Our master's servants wore,
For these Apollo left in all men's lands;
But far from these ere now,
And watched with jealous brow,
Lay the blind lightnings shut between
God's hands,
And only loosed on slaves and kings
The terror of the tempest of their
wings.

Born in those younger years
That shone with storms of spears,
And shook in the wind blown from a
dead world's pyre,
When by her back-blown hair
Napoleon caught the fair
And fierce Republic with her feet of
fire,
And stayed with iron words and hands
Her flight, and freedom in a thousand
lands:

Thou sawest the tides of things
Close over heads of kings,
And thine hand felt the thunder, and to
thee
Laurels and lightnings were
As sunbeams and soft air
Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea
Mixed, or as memory with desire,
Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood
Disrobed of flesh and blood,
And bare the heart of the most secret
hours;
And to thine hand more tame
Than birds in winter came
High hopes and unknown flying forms
of powers,
And from thy table fed, and sang
Till with the tune men's ears took fire
and rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears
With fiery sound and tears
Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame
and eyelids light,
At those high songs of thine
That stung the sense like wine,
Or fell more soft than dew or snow by
night,
Or wailed as in some flooded cave
Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we
Whose hearts, uplift to thee,
Ache with the pulse of thy remembered
song, —
We ask not nor await
From the clinched hands of fate,
As thou, remission of the world's old
wrong;
Respite we ask not, nor release:
Freedom a man may have, he shall not
peace.

Though thy most fiery hope
Storm heaven, to set wide ope
The all-sought-for gate whence God or chance debars
All feet of men, all eyes —
The old night resumes her skies,
Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and stars,
Where naught save these is sure in sight,
And, paven with death, our days are roofed with night.

One thing we can: to be
Awhile, as men may, free;
But not by hope or pleasure the most stern
Goddess, most awful-eyed,
Sits, but on either side
Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that burn,
Sad faith that cannot hope or fear,
And memory gray with many a flowerless year.

Not that in stranger's wise
I lift not loving eyes
To the fair foster-mother France, that gave
Beyond the pale fleet foam
Help to my sires and home;
Whose great sweet breast could shelter those and save
Whom from her nursing breasts and hands
Their land cast forth of old on gentler lands.

Not without thoughts that ache
For theirs and for thy sake,
I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head;
I, whose young song took flight
Toward the great heat and light
On me a child from thy far splendor shed,
From thine high place of soul and song,
Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made them strong.

Ah! not with lessening love
For memories born hereof,
I look to that sweet mother-land, and see
The old fields and fair full streams,
And skies, but fled like dreams
The feet of freedom and the thought of thee;
And all between the skies and graves
The mirth of mockers and the shame of slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,
Even she! and still so fair,
Who said, "Let there be freedom," and there was
Freedom; and as a lance
The fiery eyes of France
Touched the world's sleep, and as a sleep made pass
Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes
Smitten with fire and thunder from new skies.

Are they men's friends indeed
Who watch them weep and bleed?
Because thou hast loved us, shall the gods love thee?
Thou, first of men and friend,
Seest thou, even thou, the end?
Thou knowest what hath been, knowest thou what shall be?
Evils may pass and hopes endure;
But fate is dim, and all the gods obscure.

O nursed in airs apart,
O poet highest of heart,
Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so many things?
Are not the years more wise,
More sad than keenest eyes,
The years with soundless feet and sounding wings?
Passing we hear them not, but past
The clamor of them thrills us, and their blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord;
Thy song is as a sword
Keen-edged and scented in the blade from flowers;
Thou art lord and king; but we
Lift younger eyes, and see
Less of high hope, less light on wandering hours;

Hours that have borne men down so long,
Seen the right fail, and watched uplift the wrong.

But thine imperial soul,
As years and ruins roll
To the same end, and all things and all dreams
With the same wreck and roar
Drift on the dim same shore,
Still in the bitter foam and brackish streams
Tracks the fresh water-spring to be,
And sudden sweeter fountains in the sea.

As once the high god bound
With many a rivet round
Man's savior, and with iron nailed him through,
At the wild end of things,
Where even his own bird's wings
Flagged, whence the sea shone like a drop of dew,
From Caucasus beheld below
Past fathoms of unfathomable snow;

So the strong God, the chance
Central of circumstance,
Still shows him exile who will not be slave;
All thy great fame and thee
Girt by the dim strait sea
With multitudinous walls of wandering wave;
Shows us our greatest from his throne
Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,
A mystery many-faced,
The wild beasts know him, and the wild birds flee;
The blind night sees him, death
Shrinks beaten at his breath,
And his right hand is heavy on the sea:
We know he hath made us, and is king;
We know not if he care for any thing.

Thus much, no more, we know:
He bade what is, be so,
Bade light be, and bade night be, one by one;
Bade hope and fear, bade ill
And good redeem and kill,
Till all men be aweary of the sun,
And this world burn in its own flame,
And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,
Be those men praised of us
Who have loved and wrought and sorrowed, and not sinned
For fame or fear or gold,
Nor waxed for winter cold,
Nor changed for changes of the worldly wind;
Praised above men of men be these,
Till this one world and work we know shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,
We know that one thing is,
The splendor of a spirit without blame,
That not the laboring years
Blind-born, nor any fears,
Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame;
But purer power with fiery breath
Fills, and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,
Whose laurel-laden brow,
Made for the morning, droops not in the night;
Praised and beloved, that none
Of all thy great things done
Flies higher than thy most equal spirit's flight;
Praised, that nor doubt nor hope could bend
Earth's loftiest head, found upright to the end.

BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they, —
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
When April melts in Maytime,
Love lengthens out his playtime,
  Love lessens breath by breath,
And kiss by kiss grows older
On listless throat or shoulder
Turned sideways now, turned colder
  Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
Life gave, and seemed worth living;
Sin sweet beyond forgiving
  And brief beyond regret:
To laugh and love together,
And weave with foam and feather
And wind and words the tether
  Our memories play with yet.

Ah! one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah, sweet, one sin worth sinning
  With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
  Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love, and lose him
Between white arms and bosom,
Between the bud and blossom,
  Between your throat and chin;
To say of shame — what is it?
Of virtue — we can miss it;
Of sin — we can but kiss it,
  And it's no longer sin;

To feel the strong soul, stricken
Through fleshly pulses, quicken
Beneath swift sighs that thicken,
  Soft hands and lips that smite;
Lips that no love can tire,
With hands that sting like fire,
Weaving the web Desire
  To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
Our love with torch unlighted,
Paused near us unaffrighted,
  Who found and left him free:
None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
Will weep or laugh or wonder;
Light love stands clear of thunder,
  And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning
Of dying lights and dawning,
Night murmurs to the morning,
  "Lie still, O love, lie still;"
And half her dark limbs cover
The white limbs of her lover,
With amorous plumes that hover
  And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
Night's void and vain caresses,
And from her cloudier tresses
  Unwinds the gold of his,
With limbs from limbs dividing,
And breath by breath subsiding;
For love has no abiding,
  But dies before the kiss:

So hath it been, so be it;
For who shall live and flee it?
But look that no man see it
  Or hear it unaware;
Lest all who love and choose him
See Love, and so refuse him;
For all who find him lose him,
  But all have found him fair.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE.

Here, where the world is quiet,
  Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
  In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest time and mowing,
  A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
  And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
  For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
  And every thing but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
  And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
  Weak ships and spirits steer;

They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her, and follow
Where summer song rings hollow,
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives forever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light;
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight;
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal:
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

LOVE AT SEA.

We are in love's land to-day:
Where shall we go?
Love, shall we start or stay,
Or sail or row?
There's many a wind and way,
And never a May but May:
We are in love's hand to-day;
Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
Of sorrows kissed to death,
And joys that were;
Our ballast is a rose;
Our way lies where God knows,
And love knows where.
We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
Our masts are bills of doves,
  Our decks fine gold;
Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
Our stores are love-shafts fair
  And manifold.
    We are in love's land to-day—

Where shall we land you, sweet?
On fields of strange men's feet,
  Or fields near home?
Or where the fire-flowers blow,
Or where the flowers of snow,
  Or flowers of foam?
    We are in love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
  One heart, one hand.
— A shore like that, my dear,
Lies where no man will steer,
  No maiden land.
    Imitated from Théophile Gautier.

APRIL.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME DE CHARTRES. 12—?

WHEN the fields catch flower,
  And the underwood is green,
And from bower unto bower
  The songs of the birds begin,
  I sing with sighing between.
When I laugh and sing,
  I am heavy at heart for my sin;
I am sad in the spring
  For my love that I shall not win,
For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,
  That I know, as I sing,
I know he will needs have it so
  Who is master and king,
  Who is lord of the spirit of spring.
I will serve her, and will not spare
  Till her pity awake
Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,
  Even her for whose sake
Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my lord, O Love,
  I have laid my life at thy feet;
Have thy will thereof,
  Do as it please thee with it,
  For what shall please thee is sweet.
I am come unto thee
  To do thee service, O Love!
Yet cannot I see
  Thou wilt take any pity thereof,
Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought
  Comes never in sight,
If in her it abideth not,
  Through thy mercy and might,
  Whose heart is the world's delight.
Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,
  For my heart is set
On what hurts me, I wot not why,
  But cannot forget
What I love, what I sing for and sigh.

She is worthy of praise;
  For this grief of her giving is worth
All the joy of my days
  That lie between death's day and birth,
  All the lordship of things upon earth.
Nay, what have I said?
  I would not be glad if I could:
My dream and my dread
  Are of her, and for her sake I would
That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,
  Then were I dead;
If I sang not a little to say to you,
  (Could it be said)
  O my love, how my heart would be fed;
Ah, sweet who hast hold of my heart,
  For thy love's sake I live;
Do but tell me, ere either depart,
  What a lover may give
For a woman so fair as thou art.

The lovers that disbelieve,
  False rumors shall grieve
And evil-speaking shall part.

BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honey-comb
Is pleasant; but one tires of scented time,
Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,
And that strong purple under juice and foam
Where the wine's heart has burst;
Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time: I will not pray
Even to change the bitterness of it,
The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,
To make your tears fall where your soft hair lay
All blurred and heavy in some perfumed wise
Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythèd wheat
Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of red?
These were not sown, these are not harvested,
They grow a month, and are cast under feet,
And none has care thereof,
As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,
Each change of love in eyelids and eyebrows;
The fashion of fair temples tremulous
With tender blood, and color of your throat;
I know not how love is gone out of this,
Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures upon all these:
But out of these one shall not gather love.
Day hath not strength nor the night shade enough
To make love whole, and fill his lips with ease,
As some bee-builded cell
Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your hair
Less full of purple color and hid spice,
And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes
Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste care;
And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not yet
Worth patience to regret.

THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,
And pricked at lip with tender red.
Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between
Lest you should bruise the curious head.

A live thing may be; who shall know?
The summer knows and suffers it;
For the cool moss is thick and sweet
Each side, and saves the blossom so
That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns
About it: breathless though it be,
Bow down and worship; more than we
Is the least flower whose life returns,
Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight
With wants, with many memories:
These see their mother what she is,
Glad-growing, till August leave more bright
The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,
Blown all one way to shelter it
From trample of strayed kine, with feet
Felt heavier than the moorhen was,
Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

You call it sundew: how it grows,
If with its color it have breath,
If life taste sweet to it, if death
Pain its soft petal, no man knows:
Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,
In these green miles the spring begun
Thy growth ere April had half done
With the soft secret of her ways,
Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower!
I have a secret halved with thee.
The name that is love's name to me
Thou knowest, and the face of her
Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,
Colored the heavy moss-water:
Thou wert not worth green midsummer,
Nor fit to live to August blue,
O sundew, not remembering her.

AN INTERLUDE.

In the greenest growth of the Maytime,
I rode where the woods were wet,
Between the dawn and the daytime:
The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,
Though the ways and the woods smelt sweet,—
The breath at your lips that panted,
The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,
And the green grew golden above;
And the flag-flowers lightened with laughter,
And the meadow-sweet shook with love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses
Moved soft as a weak wind blows:
You passed me as April passes,
With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were slender,
Your bright foot paused at the sedge:
It might be to watch the tender
Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month blanches
With flowery frost of May;
It might be a bird in the branches;
It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger
With foot drawn back from the dew,
Till a sunbeam straight like a finger
Struck sharp through the leaves at you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,
And a bird to the right sang *Here*;
And the arch of the leaves was hollow,
And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,
I knew what the bird's note said:
By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,
You were queen by the gold on your head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember
Recalls a regret of the sun,
I remember, forget, and remember
What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,
The day and the way we met:
You hoped we were both broken-hearted,
And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower
Seemed still to murmur and smile
As you murmured and smiled for an hour:
I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom
You lifted, and waved, and passed,
With head hung down to the bosom,
And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is,
That neither is most to blame,
If you've forgotten my kisses,
And I've forgotten your name.

HENDECASYLLABICS.

In the month of the long decline of roses,
I, beholding the summer dead before me,
Set my face to the sea, and journeyed silent,
Gazing eagerly where above the sea-mark
Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions
Half divided the eyelids of the sunset;
Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
Moving tremulous under feet of angels
Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;
Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered foliage,
Shaken fitfully, full of sound and shadow;
And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels,
Long mysterious reaches fed with moonlight,
Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding channel,
Blown about by the lips of winds I knew not,
Winds not born in the north nor any quarter,
Winds not warm with the south nor any sunshine;
Heard between them a voice of exultation,
"Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is faded,
Even like as a leaf the year is withered,
All the fruits of the day from all her branches
Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
All the flowers are dead, the tender blossoms,
All are taken away; the season wasted,
Like an ember among the fallen ashes.
Now with light of the winter days, with moonlight,
Light of snow, and the bitter light of hoar-frost,
We bring flowers that fade not after autumn,
Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons,
Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves were falser),
Woven under the eyes of stars and planets
When low light was upon the windy reaches
Where the flower of foam was blown a lily
Dropt among the sonorous fruitless furrows
And green fields of the sea that make no pasture:
Since the winter begins, the weeping winter,
All whose flowers are tears, and round his temples
Iron blossom of frost is bound forever."

SAPPHICS.

All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips and I too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where under
Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
While behind a clamor of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not.
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,
None endured the sound of her song for weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown forever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song,
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my Sappho!"
Yet she turned her face from the Love's, she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the gray sea-side, unassuaged, unheard of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,

Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long staves
Sit in the market-houses, and speak words
Made sweet with wisdom as the rare wine is
Thickened with honey; and ye sons of these
Who in the glad thick streets go up and down
For pastime or grave traffic or mere chance;
And all fair women having rings of gold
On hands or hair; and chiefest over these
I name you, daughters of this man the king,
Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of pure brass
Under the bubbled wells, till each round lip
Stooped with loose gurgle of waters incoming,
Found me an old sick woman, lamed and lean,
Beside a growth of builded olive-boughs
Whence multiplied thick song of thick-plumed throats —
Also wet tears filled up my hollow hands
By reason of my crying into them —
And pitied me; for as cold water ran
And washed the pitchers full from lip to lip,
So washed both eyes full the strong salt of tears.
And ye put water to my mouth, made sweet
With brown hill-honey, so in time I spoke,
And gathered my loose knees from under me.
Moreover, in the broad fair halls this month
Have I found space and bountiful abode
To please me. I, Demeter speak of this,
Who am the mother and the mate of things:
For as all men by drugs or singing words
Shut the doors inward of the narrow womb
Like a lock bolted with round iron through,
Thus I shut up the body and sweet mouth
Of all soft pasture and the tender land,
So that no seed can enter in by it,
Though one sow thickly, nor some grain get out
Past the hard clods men cleave and bite with steel
To widen the sealed lips of them for use.
None of you is there in the peopled street
But knows how all the dry-drawn furrows ache
With no green spot made count of in the black;
How the wind finds no comfortable grass,
Nor is assuaged with bud nor breath of herbs;
And in hot autumn, when ye house the stacks,
All fields are helpless in the sun, all trees
Stand as a man stripped out of all but skin.
Nevertheless, ye sick have help to get
By means and stablished ordinance of God;
For God is wiser than a good man is.
But never shall new grass be sweet in earth
Till I get righted of my wound and wrong
By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus.
For of all other gods is none save me

Clothed with like power to build and break the year.
I make the lesser green begin, when spring
Touches not earth but with one fearful foot;
And as a careful gilder with grave art
Soberly colors and completes the face,
Mouth, chin, and all, of some sweet work in stone,
I carve the shapes of grass and tender corn,
And color the ripe edges and long spikes
With the red increase and the grace of gold.
No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger
To kill the secret of the fat white fleece
With stains of blue and purple wrought in it.
Three moons were made, and three moons burnt away,
While I held journey hither out of Crete,
Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate,
Whom my wound stung with double iron point;
For all my face was like a cloth wrung out
With close and weeping wrinkles, and both lids
Sodden with salt continuance of tears.
For Hades and the sidelong will of Zeus,
And that lame wisdom that has writhen feet,
Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame,
These three took evil will at me, and made
Such counsel, that when time got wing to fly
This Hades out of summer and low fields
Forced the bright body of Persephone:
Out of pure grass, where she lying down, red flowers
Made their sharp little shadows on her sides,
Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden flesh, —
And chill water slid over her reddening feet,
Killing the throbs in their soft blood; and birds,
Perched next her elbow, and pecking at her hair,
Stretched their necks more to see her than even to sing.
A sharp thing is it I have need to say;
For Hades holding both white wrists of hers
Unloosed the girdle, and with knot by knot
Bound her between his wheels upon the seat,
Bound her pure body, holiest yet and dear
To me and God as always, clothed about
With blossoms loosened, as her knees went down,
Let fall as she let go of this and this
By tens and twenties tumbled to her feet,
White waifs or purple of the pasturage.
Therefore with only going up and down
My feet were wasted, and the gracious air,
To me discomfortable and dun, became
As weak smoke blowing in the underworld.
And finding in the process of ill days
What part had Zeus herein, and how as mate
He coped with Hades, yokefellow in sin,
I set my lips against the meat of gods,
And drank not, neither ate or slept, in heaven.
Nor in the golden greeting of their mouths
Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all
Track my feet going in the ways of them.
Like a great fire on some strait slip of land
Between two washing inlets of wet sea
That burns the grass up to each lip of beach,
And strengthens, waxing in the growth of wind,
So burnt my soul in me at heaven and earth,
Each way a ruin and a hungry plague,
Visible evil; nor could any night

Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the sun
With competence of gold fill out my want.
Yea, so my flame burnt up the grass and stones,
Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,
Distempered all the gracious work, and made
Sick change, unseasonable increase of days
And scant avail of seasons; for by this
The fair gods faint in hollow heaven: there comes
No taste of burnings of the twofold fat
To leave their palates smooth, nor in their lips
Soft rings of smoke, and weak scent wandering;
All cattle waste and rot, and their ill smell
Grows alway from the lank, unsavory flesh
That no man slays for offering; the sea
And waters moved beneath the heath and corn
Preserve the people of fin-twinkling fish,
And river-flies feed thick upon the smooth;
But all earth over is no man or bird
(Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)
That lacks not, and is wearied with much loss.
Meantime, the purple inward of the house
Was softened with all grace of scent and sound
In ear and nostril perfecting my praise;
Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-cake
And the just grain with dues of the shed salt
Made me content: yet my hand loosened not
Its gripe upon your harvest all year long.
While I, thus woman-muffled in wan flesh
And waste externals of a perished face,
Preserved the levels of my wrath and love
Patiently ruled; and with soft offices
Cooled the sharp noons, and busied t warm nights
In care of this my choice, this child r choice,
Triptolemus, the king's selected son:
That this fair yearlong body, whi hath grown
Strong with strange milk upon t mortal lip
And nerved with half a god, might increase
Outside the bulk and the bare scope man;
And waxen over large to hold within
Base breath of yours, and this impov ished air,
I might exalt him past the flame stars,
The limit and walled reach of the gre world.
Therefore my breast made common his mouth
Immortal savors, and the taste where
Twice their hard life strains out t colored veins,
And twice its brain confirms the narr shell.
Also at night, unwinding cloth fr cloth
As who unhusks an almond to the whi
And pastures curiously the purer tas
I bared the gracious limbs and the s feet,
Unswaddled the weak hands, and mid-ash
Laid the sweet flesh of either fee side,
More tender for impressure of so touch
Than wax to any pen; and lit aroun
Fire, and made crawl the white, wo shapen flame,
And leap in little angers spark spark
At head at once, and feet; and faint hair
Hissed with rare sprinkles in the clo curl,
And like scaled oarage of a keen t fish
In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet
Struck out, and the flame bit not in flesh,

But like a kiss it curled his lip, and heat
Fluttered his eyelids; so each night I blew
The hot ash red to purge him to full god.
Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul
For painful food, and chokes thereon, being fed;
And ill slant eyes interpret the straight sun,
But in their scope its white is wried to black:
By the queen Metaneira mean I this;
For with sick wrath upon her lips and heart,
Narrowing with fear the spleenful passages,
She thought to thread this web's fine ravel out,
Nor leave her shuttle split in combing it;
Therefore she stole on us, and with hard sight
Peered, and stooped close; then with pale, open mouth
As the fire smote her in the eyes between
Cried, and the child's laugh sharply shortening
As fire doth under rain, fell off; the flame
Writhed once all through and died, and in thick dark
Tears fell from mine on the child's weeping eyes,
Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance
And mortal fallen anew. Who not the less
From bud of beard to pale-gray flower of hair
Shall wax vine-wise to a lordly vine, whose grapes
Bleed the red, heavy blood of swoln soft wine,
Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until
Full of white years and blossom of hoary days
I take him perfected; for whose one sake
I am thus gracious to the least who stands
Filleted with white wool and girt upon
As he whose prayer endures upon the lip
And falls not waste: wherefore let sacrifice
Burn and run red in all the wider ways;
Seeing I have sworn by the pale temples' band
And poppied hair of gold Persephone
Sad-tressed and pleached low down about her brows,
And by the sorrow in her lips, and death
Her dumb and mournful-mouthèd minister,
My word for you is eased of its harsh weight
And doubled with soft promise; and your king
Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and swathed
Purple and pale for golden burial,
Shall be your helper in my services,
Dividing earth and reaping fruits thereof
In fields where wait, well-girt, well-wreathen, all
The heavy-handed seasons all year through;
Saving the choice of warm spear-headed grain,
And stooping sharp to the slant-sided share
All beasts that furrow the remeasured land
With their bowed necks of burden equable.

AUGUST.

THERE were four apples on the bough,
Half gold, half red, that one might know
The blood was ripe inside the core;
The color of the leaves was more
Like stems of yellow corn that grow
Through all the gold June meadow's floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good
To feed on, and the split green wood,
With all its bearded lips and stains
Of mosses in the cloven veins,
Most pleasant, if one lay or stood
In sunshine or in happy rains.

There were four apples on the tree,
Red stained through gold, that all might see
The sun went warm from core to rind;
The green leaves made the summer blind
In that soft place they kept for me
With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun,
And where the bluest air begun,
Thirsted for song to help the heat;
As I to feel my lady's feet
Draw close before the day were done:
Both lips grew dry with dreams of it.

In the mute August afternoon
They trembled to some undertune
Of music in the silver air:
Great pleasure was it to be there
Till green turned duskier, and the moon
Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight
To watch the red moons wane to white
'Twixt gray seamed stems of apple-trees:
A sense of heavy harmonies
Grew on the growth of patient night,
More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon
The air, still eager from the noon,
Flagged after heat, not wholly dead;
Against the stem I leant my head;
The color soothed me like a tune,
Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew
More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew
Between the round ripe leaves had blurred
The rind with stain and wet: I heard
A wind that blew and breathed and blew,
Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit
Felt smoother, and the brown tree-root
Felt the mould warmer: I, too, felt
(As water feels the slow gold melt
Right through it when the day burns mute)
The peace of time wherein love dwelt.

There were four apples on the tree,
Gold stained on red, that all might see
The sweet blood filled them to the core
The color of her hair is more
Like stems of fair faint gold, that be
Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.[1]

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber
The queen's mouth was most fair:
She spake a word of God's mother
As the combs went in her hair.
Mary that is of might,
Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her
A span's length off her head:
She sang this song of God's mother
And of her bearing-bed.
Mary most full of grace,
Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,
She looked against her side;
And either way from the short silk band
Her girdle was all wried.
Mary that all good may,
Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed:
The twain were maidens clean;
The first of them had white and red,
The third had riven green.
Mary that is so sweet,
Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair:
Two were gloved soft and shod;
The third had feet and fingers bare,
She was the likest God.
Mary that wieldeth land,
Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease:
The twain were good women;
The first two were the two Maries,
The third was Magdalen.
Mary that perfect is,
Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

[1] Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's.

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,
To serve him well upon:
The first of them were Peter and Paul,
The third of them was John.
Mary, God's handmaiden,
Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,
But if it be very mine,
The bedstead shall be gold two spans,
The bedfoot silver fine."
Mary that made God mirth,
Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,
And if it be none of mine,
The manger shall be straw two spans,
Betwixen kine and kine."
Mary that made sin cease,
Bring us to thy Son's peace.

Christ was born upon this wise:
It fell on such a night,
Neither with sounds of psalteries,
Nor with fire for light.
Mary that is God's spouse,
Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east
With a great sound and sweet:
Kings gave gold to make him feast,
And myrrh for him to eat.
Mary, of thy sweet mood,
Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,
One handmaid at his feet:
The twain of them were fair and red,
The third one was right sweet.
Mary that is most wise,
Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BERSABE.

A MIRACLE-PLAY.

King David. Knights mine, all that be in hall,
I have a council to you all,
Because of this thing God lets fall
Among us for a sign.

For some days hence as I did eat
From kingly dishes my good meat,
There flew a bird between my feet
As red as any wine.
This bird had a long bill of red,
And a gold ring above his head;
Long time he sat and nothing said,
Put softly down his neck, and fed
From the gilt patens fine:
And as I marvelled at the last,
He shut his two keen eyen fast,
And suddenly woxe big and brast
Ere one should tell to nine.

Primus Miles. Sir, note this that I will say:
That Lord who maketh corn with hay,
And morrows each of yesterday,
He hath you in his hand.

Secundus Miles (*Paganus quidam*). By Satan I hold no such thing;
For if wine swell within a king
Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,
The same shall dream of wine-bibbing
Whilst he can lie or stand.

Queen Bersabe. Peace now, lords, for Godis head.
Ye chirk as starlings that be fed,
And gape as fishes newly dead:
The devil put your bones to bed,
Lo, this is all to say.

Secundus Miles. By Mahound, lords, I have good will
This devil's bird to wring and spill;
For now meseems our game goes ill,
Ye have scant hearts to play.

Tertius Miles. Lo, sirs, this word is there said,
That Urias the knight is dead
Through some ill craft: by Poulis head,
I doubt his blood hath made so red
This bird that flew from the queen's bed
Whereof ye have such fear.

King David. Yea, my good knave, and is it said
That I can raise men from the dead?
By God I think to have his head
Who saith words of my lady's bed
For any thief to hear.
Et percutiat eum in capite.

Queen Bersabe. I wis men shall spit at me,
And say it were but right for thee
That one should hang thee on a tree:
Ho! it were a fair thing to see
The big stones bruise her false body;
Fie! who shall see her dead?

King David. I rede you have no fear of this,
For as ye wot, the first good kiss
I had must be the last of his;
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,
And lady of a house that is
Full rich of meat and bread.

Primus Miles. I bid you make good cheer to be
So fair a queen as all men see.
And hold us for your lieges free:
By Peter's soul that hath the key,
Ye have good hap of it.

Secundus Miles. I would that he were hanged and dead
Who hath no joy to see your head
With gold about it, barred on red:
I hold him as a sow of lead
That is so scant of wit.

Tunc dicat NATHAN *propheta.* O king! I have a word to thee:
The child that is in Bersabe
Shall wither without light to see;
This word is come of God by me
For sin that ye have done.
Because herein ye did not right,
To take the fair one lamb to smite
That was of Urias the knight:
Ye wist he had but one.
Full many sheep I wot ye had,
And many women, when ye bade
To do your will and keep you glad;
And a good crown about your head
With gold to show thereon.
This Urias had one poor house,
With low-barred latoun shot-windows,
And scant of corn to fill a mouse;
And rusty basnets for his brows,
To wear them to the bone.
Yea, the roofs also, as men sain,
Were thin to hold against the rain:
Therefore what rushes were there lain
Grew wet withouten foot of men;
The stancheons were all gone in twain
As sick man's flesh is gone.
Nathless he had great joy to see
The long hair of this Bersabe
Fall round her lap and round her knee
Even to her small soft feet, that be
Shod now with crimson royally,
And covered with clean gold.
Likewise great joy he had to kiss
Her throat, where now the scarlet is
Against her little chin, I wis,
That then was but cold.
No scarlet then her kirtle had,
And little gold about it sprad;
But her red mouth was always glad
To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad
To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad
With love they had to hold.

Secundus Miles. How! old thief, thy wits are lame;
To clip such it is no shame;
I rede you in the devil's name,
Ye come not here to make men game:
By Termagaunt that maketh grame,
I shall to-bete thine head.
Hic Diabolus capiat eum.
This knave hath sharp fingers, perfay;
Mahound you thank and keep alway,
And give you good knees to pray;
What man hath no lust to play,
The devil wring his ears, I say:
There is no more but wellaway,
For now am I dead.

King David. Certes his mouth is wried and black,
Full little pence be in his sack:
This devil hath him by the back,
It is no boot to lie.

Nathan. Sitteth now still, and learn of me
A little while, and ye shall see
The face of God's strength presently.
All queens made as this Bersabe,
All that were fair and foul ye be,
Come hither; it am I.
Et hic omnes cantabunt.

Herodias. I am the queen Herodias.
This headband of my temples was
King Herod's gold band woven me;

This broken dry staff in my hand
Was the queen's staff of a great land
Betwixen Perse and Samarie.
For that one dancing of my feet,
The fire is come in my green wheat,
From one sea to the other sea.

Aholibah. I am the queen Aholibah.
My lips kissed dumb the word of *Ah*
Sighed on strange lips grown sick thereby.
God wrought to me my royal bed:
The inner work thereof was red,
The outer work was ivory.
My mouth's heat was the heat of flame
For lust towards the kings that came
With horsemen riding royally.

Cleopatra. I am the queen of Ethiope.
Love bade my kissing eyelids ope,
That men beholding might praise love;
My hair was wonderful and curled;
My lips held fast the mouth o' the world
To spoil the strength and speech thereof.
The latter triumph in my breath
Bowed down the beaten brows of death,
Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

Abihail. I am the queen of Tyrians.
My hair was glorious for twelve spans,
That dried to loose dust afterward.
My stature was a strong man's length:
My neck was like a place of strength
Built with white walls, even and hard.
Like the first noise of rain leaves catch
One from another, snatch by snatch,
Is my praise, hissed against and marred.

Azubah. I am the queen of Amorites.
My face was like a place of lights
With multitudes at festival.
The glory of my gracious brows
Was like God's house made glorious
With colors upon either wall.
Between my brows and hair there was
A white space like a space of glass
With golden candles over all.

Aholah. I am the queen of Amalek.
There was no tender touch or fleck
To spoil my body or bared feet.
My words were soft like dulcimers,
And the first sweet of grape-flowers
Made each side of my bosom sweet.
My raiment was as tender fruit
Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree root,
Bruised balm-blossom and budded wheat.

Ahinoam. I am the queen Ahinoam.
Like the throat of a soft slain lamb
Was my throat, softer veined than his:
My lips were as two grapes the sun
Lays his whole weight of heat upon
Like a mouth heavy with a kiss:
My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,
My temples therein as a piece
Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

Atarah. I am the queen Sidonian.
My face made faint the face of man,
And strength was bound between my brows.
Spikenard was hidden in my ships,
Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,
White wools that shine as color does,
Soft linen dyed upon the fold,
Split spice and cores of scented gold,
Cedar and broken calamus.

Semiramis. I am the queen Semiramis.
The whole world, and the sea that is
In fashion like a chrysopras,
The noise of all men laboring,
The priest's mouth tired through thanksgiving,
The sound of love in the blood's pause,
The strength of love in the blood's beat,
All these were cast beneath my feet,
And all found lesser than I was.

Hesione. I am the queen Hesione.
The seasons that increased in me
Made my face fairer than all men's.
I had the summer in my hair;
And all the pale gold autumn air
Was as the habit of my sense.
My body was as fire that shone:
God's beauty that makes all things one
Was one among my handmaidens.

Chrysothemis. I am the queen of
Samothrace.
God, making roses, made my face
As a rose filled up full with red.
My prows made sharp the straitened
seas
From Pontus to that Chersonese
Whereon the ebbed Asian stream is
shed.
My hair was as sweet scent that drips:
Love's breath begun about my lips
Kindled the lips of people dead.

Thomyris. I am the queen of Scy-
thians.
My strength was like no strength of
man's,
My face like day, my breast like
spring.
My fame was felt in the extreme land
That hath sunshine on the one hand,
And on the other star-shining.
Yea, and the wind there fails of breath;
Yea, and there life is waste like death;
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

Harhas. I am the queen of Anakim.
In the spent years whose speech is dim,
Whose raiment is the dust and death,
My stately body without stain
Shone as the shining race of rain
Whose hair a great wind scattereth.
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

Myrrha. I am the queen Arabian.
The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran
Smelt like my perfumed eyelids' smell.
A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,
That ached with kisses afterward;
My brain rang like a beaten bell.
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,
Sin made my breasts subside and
swell.

Pasiphae. I am the queen Pasiphae.
Not all the pure clean-colored sea
Could cleanse or cool my yearning
veins;
Nor any root nor herb that grew,
Flag-leaves that let green water through,
Nor washing of the dews and rains.
From shame's pressed core I wrung the
sweet
Fruit's savor that was death to eat,
Whereof no seed but death remains.

Sappho. I am the queen of Lesbians.
My love, that had no part in man's,
Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.
The intolerable infinite desire
Made my face pale like faded fire
When the ashen pyre falls through
with heat.
My blood was hot wan wine of love,
And my song's sound the sound thereof,
The sound of the delight of it.

Messalina. I am the queen of Italy.
These were the signs God set on me:
A barren beauty subtle and sleek,
Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn
wan
With fierce false lips of many a man,
Large temples where the blood ran
weak,
A mouth athirst and amorous,
And hungering as the grave's mouth
does,
That, being an hungered, cannot
speak.

Amestris. I am the queen of Persians.
My breasts were lordlier than bright
swans,
My body as amber fair and thin.
Strange flesh was given my lips for
bread,
With poisonous hours my days were
fed,
And my feet shod with adder-skin.
In Shushan toward Ecbatane
I wrought my joys with tears and pain
My loves with blood and bitter sin.

Ephrath. I am the queen of Rephaim.
God, that some while refraineth him,
Made in the end a spoil of me.
My rumor was upon the world
As strong sound of swoln water hurled
Through porches of the straining sea.
My hair was like the flag-flower,
And my breasts carven goodlier
Than beryl with chalcedony.

Pasithea. I am the queen of Cypriotes.
Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown throats,
Sang of me many a tender thing.
My maidens, girdled loose, and braced
With gold from bosom to white waist,
Praised me between their wool-combing.
All that praise Venus all night long
With lips like speech and lids like song
Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

Alaciel. I am the queen Alaciel.
My mouth was like that moist gold cell
Whereout the thickest honey drips.
Mine eyes were as a gray-green sea:
The amorous blood that smote on me
Smote to my feet and finger-tips.
My throat was whiter than the dove,
Mine eyelids as the seals of love,
And as the doors of love my lips.

Erigone. I am the queen Erigone.
The wild wine shed as blood on me
Made my face brighter than a bride's.
My large lips had the old thirst of earth,
Mine arms the might of the old sea's girth
Bound round the whole world's iron sides.
Within mine eyes and in mine ears
Were music and the wine of tears,
And light, and thunder of the tides.

Et hic exeant, et dicat BERSABE *regina.*
Alas! God, for thy great pity
And for the might that is in thee,
Behold, I woful Bersabe
Cry out with stoopings of my knee,
And thy wrath laid and bound on me
Till I may see thy love.
Behold, Lord, this child is grown
Within me between bone and bone
To make me mother of a son,
Made of my body with strong moan:
There shall not be another one
That shall be made hereof.

King David. Lord God, alas! what shall I sain?
Lo, thou art as an hundred men
Both to break and build again:
The wild ways thou makest plain,
Thine hands hold the hail and rain,
And thy fingers both grape and grain;
Of their largess we be all well fain,
And of their great pity:
The sun thou madest of good gold,
Of clean silver the moon cold,
All the great stars thou hast told
As thy cattle in thy fold
Every one by his name of old;
Wind and water thou hast in hold,
Both the land and the long sea;
Both the green sea and the land,
Lord God, thou hast in hand,
Both white water and gray sand;
Upon thy right or thy left hand
There is no man that may stand:
Lord, thou rue on me.
O wise Lord, if thou be keen
To note things amiss that been,
I am not worth a shell of bean
More than an old mare meagre and lean.
For all my wrong-doing with my queen,
It grew not of our heartès clean,
But it began of her body.
For it fell in the hot May,
I stood within a paven way
Built of fair bright stone, perfay,
That is as fire of night and day,
And lighteth all my house.
Therein be neither stones nor sticks,
Neither red nor white bricks,
But for cubits five or six
There is most goodly sardonyx,
And amber laid in rows.
It goes round about my roofs,
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)
There is good space for horse and hoofs,
Plain and nothing perilous.
For the fair green weather's heat,
And for the smell of leavès sweet,
It is no marvel, well ye weet,
A man to waxen amorous.
This I say now by my case
That spied forth of that royal place:
There I saw in no great space
Mine own sweet, both body and face,
Under the fresh boughs.
In a water that was there
She wesshe her goodly body bare,
And dried it with her owen hair:
Both her arms and her knees fair,
Both bosom and brows;

Both shoulders and eke thighs,
Tho she wesshe upon this wise;
Ever she sighed with little sighs,
And ever she gave God thank.
Yea, God wot I can well see yet
Both her breast and her sides all wet,
And her long hair withouten let
Spead sideways like a drawing net;
Full dear bought and full far fet
Was that sweet thing there y-set;
It were a hard thing to forget
How both lips and eyen met,
Breast and breath sank.
So goodly a sight as there she was,
Lying looking on her glass
By wan water in green grass,
Yet saw never man.
So soft and great she was and bright
With all her body waxen white,
I woxe nigh blind to see the light
Shed out of it to left and right:
This bitter sin from that sweet sight
Between us twain began.
Nathan. Now, sir, be merry anon,
For ye shall have a full wise son,
Goodly and great of flesh and bone:
There shall no king be such an one,
I swear by Godis rood.
Therefore, lord, be merry here,
And go to meat withouten fear,
And hear a mass with goodly cheer;
For to all folk ye shall be dear,
And all folk of your blood.

Et tunc dicant Laudamus.

ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen, and yet it shall be seen,
That out of tender mouths God's praise hath been
Made perfect, and with wood and simple string
He hath played music sweet as shawm-playing
To please himself with softness of all sound;
And no small thing but hath been sometime found
Full sweet of use, and no such humbleness
But God hath bruised withal the sentences
And evidence of wise men witnessing;
No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing
It never shall get sight of the great sun;
The strength of ten has been the strength of one,
And lowliness has waxed imperious.
There was in Rome a man Theophilus,
Of right great blood and gracious ways, that had
All noble fashions to make people glad
And a soft life of pleasurable days.
He was a goodly man for one to praise,
Flawless and whole upward from foot to head;
His arms were a red hawk that alway fed
On a small bird with feathers gnawed upon,
Beaten and plucked about the bosom-bone
Whereby a small round fleck like fire there was:
They called it in their tongue lampadias:
This was the banner of the lordly man.
In many straits of sea and reaches wan
Full of quick wind, and many a shaken firth,
It had seen fighting days of either earth,
Westward or east of waters Gaditane
(This was the place of sea-rocks under Spain
Called after the great praise of Hercules),
And north beyond the washing Pontic seas,
Far windy Russian places fabulous,
And salt fierce tides of storm-swoln Bosphorus.
Now, as this lord came straying in Rome town,
He saw little lattice open down,
And after it a press of maidens' heads
That sat upon their cold small quiet beds
Talking, and played upon short-stringèd lutes;
And other some ground perfume out of roots

Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia,
Saffron and aloes and wild cassia,
Colored all through and smelling of the sun;
And over all these was a certain one
Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about her hair,
And bosom flowerful; her face more fair
Than sudden-singing April in soft lands;
Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both hands
She held a psalter painted green and red.
This Theophile laughed at the heart, and said, —
"Now God so help me hither and St Paul,
As by the new time of their festival
I have good will to take this maid to wife."
And herewith fell to fancies of her life,
And soft half-thoughts that ended suddenly.
This is man's guise to please himself, when he
Shall not see one thing of his pleasant things,
Nor with outwatch of many travailings
Come to be eased of the least pain he hath
For all his love and all his foolish wrath,
And all the heavy manner of his mind.
Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind,
That casts his nets across the boat awry
To strike the sea, but lo! he striketh dry,
And plucks them back all broken for his pain,
And bites his beard, and casts across again,
And reaching wrong slips over in the sea.
So hath this man a strangled neck for fee,
For all his cost he chuckles in his throat.
This Theophile that little hereof wote
Laid wait to hear of her what she might be:
Men told him she had name of Dorothy,
And was a lady of a worthy house.
Thereat this knight grew inly glorious
That he should have a love so fair of place.
She was a maiden of most quiet face,
Tender of speech, and had no hardihood,
But was nigh feeble of her fearful blood;
Her mercy in her was so marvellous
From her least years, that seeing her schoolfellows
That read beside her stricken with a rod,
She would cry sore, and say some word to God
That he would ease her fellow of his pain.
There is no touch of sun or fallen rain
That ever fell on a more gracious thing.
In middle Rome there was in stone-working
The church of Venus painted royally.
The chapels of it were some two or three,
In each of them her tabernacle was,
And a wide window of six feet in glass
Colored with all her works in red and gold.
The altars had bright cloths and cups to hold
The wine of Venus for the services,
Made out of honey and crushed wood-berries
That shed sweet yellow through the thick wet red,
That on high days was borne upon the head
Of Venus' priest, for any man to drink;
So that in drinking he should fall to think
On some fair face, and in the thought thereof
Worship, and such should triumph in his love.
For this soft wine that did such grace and good
Was new trans-shaped and mixed with love's own blood,
That in the fighting Trojan time was bled;
For which came such a woe to Diomed

That he was stifled after in hard sea.
And some said that this wine-shedding should be
Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,
That curled upon the thorns and broken wood,
And round the gold silk shoes on Venus' feet:
The taste thereof was as hot honey sweet,
And in the mouth ran soft and riotous.
This was the holiness of Venus' house.
It was their worship, that in August days
Twelve maidens should go through those Roman ways
Naked, and having gold across their brows,
And their hair twisted in short golden rows,
To minister to Venus in this wise;
And twelve men chosen in their companies
To match these maidens by the altar-stair,
All in one habit, crowned upon the hair.
Among these men was chosen Theophile.
This knight went out, and prayed a little while,
Holding Queen Venus by her hands and knees:
I will give thee twelve royal images
Cut in glad gold, with marvels of wrought stone,
For thy sweet priests to lean and pray upon,
Jasper and hyacinth and chrysopras,
And the strange Asian thalamite that was
Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea
Among the little sleepy pearls, to be
A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame
Burning all night red as hot brows of shame,
So thou wilt be my lady without sin.
Goddess that art all gold outside and in,
Help me to serve thee in thy holy way.
Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing day
There shone a laughter in the singing stars
Round the gold-ceilèd bride-bed wherein Mars
Touched thee and had thee in your kissing wise.
Now, therefore, sweet, kiss thou my maiden's eyes
That they may open graciously towards me;
And this new fashion of thy shrine shall be
As soft with gold as thine own happy head.
The goddess, that was painted with face red
Between two long green tumbled sides of sea,
Stooped her neck sideways, and spake pleasantly:
Thou shalt have grace as thou art thrall of mine.
And with this came a savor of shed wine,
And plucked-out petals from a rose's head:
And softly with slow laughs of lip she said, —
Thou shalt have favor all thy days of me.
Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,
Saying: O sweet, if one should strive or speak
Against God's ways, he gets a beaten cheek
For all his wage and shame above all men.
Therefore I have no will to turn again
When God saith "go," lest a worse thing fall out.
Then she, misdoubting lest he went about
To catch her wits, made answer somewhat thus:
I have no will, my lord Theophilus,
To speak against this worthy word of yours;
Knowing how God's will in all speech endures,
That save by grace there may no thing be said.
Then Theophile waxed light from foot to head,

And softly fell upon this answering:
It is well seen you are a chosen thing
To do God service in his gracious way.
I will that you make haste and holiday
To go next year upon the Venus stair,
Covered none else, but crowned upon your hair,
And do the service that a maiden doth.
She said: But I that am Christ's maid were loath
To do this thing that hath such bitter name.
Thereat his brows were beaten with sore shame,
And he came off, and said no other word.
Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-bird,
And he fell fingering at the staff of it,
And laughed for wrath, and stared between his feet,
And out of a chafed heart he spake as thus:
Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,
Feigning herself a fool, and hard to love;
Yet in good time for all she boasteth of
She shall be like a little beaten bird.
And while his mouth was open in that word,
He came upon the house Janiculum,
Where some went busily, and other some
Talked in the gate called the gate glorious.
The emperor, which was one Gabalus,
Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.
To whom is come Theophilus anon,
And said as thus: *Beau sire, Dieu vous aide.*
And afterward sat under him, and said
All this thing through as ye have wholly heard.
This Gabalus laughed thickly in his beard.
Yea, this is righteousness and maiden rule.
Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.
And japed at them as one full villanous,
In a lewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,
And sent his men to bind her as he bade.
Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,
And haled her forth as men hale pick-purses:
A little need God knows they had of this,
To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.
Thus went she lowly, making a soft prayer,
As one who stays the sweet wine in his mouth,
Murmuring with eased lips, and is most loath
To have done wholly with the sweet of it:
Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest all men's wit
And all the feeble fashion of my ways,
O perfect God, that from all yesterdays
Abidest whole with morrows perfected,
I pray thee by thy mother's holy head,
Thou help me to do right, that I not slip:
I have no speech nor strength upon my lip,
Except thou help me, who art wise and sweet.
Do this, too, for those nails that clove thy feet,
Let me die maiden after many pains.
Though I be least among thy handmaidens,
Doubtless I shall take death more sweetly thus.
Now have they brought her to King Gabalus,
Who laughed in all his throat some breathing-whiles.
By God, he said, if one should leap two miles,
He were not pained about the sides so much.
This were a soft thing for a man to touch.
Shall one so chafe that hath such little bones?
And shook his throat with thick and chuckled moans
For laughter that she had such holiness.
What aileth thee, wilt thou do services?
It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.
Then said this lady with her maiden mouth,

Shamefaced, and something paler in the cheek:
Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to speak
Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,
For all my shame yet know I this again,
I may not speak, nor after down-lying
Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,
Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my hands,
But my soul in some measure understands
God's grace laid like a garment over me.
For this fair God that out of strong, sharp sea
Lifted the shapely and green-colored land,
And hath the weight of heaven in his hand
As one might hold a bird, and under him
The heavy golden planets beam by beam
Building the feasting-chambers of his house,
And the large world he holdeth with his brows,
And with the light of them astonisheth
All place and time and face of life and death,
And motion of the north wind and the south,
And is the sound within his angel's mouth
Of singing words and words of thanksgiving,
And is the color of the latter spring
And heat upon the summer and the sun,
And is beginning of all things begun,
And gathers in him all things to their end,
And with the fingers of his hand doth bend
The stretched-out sides of heaven like a sail,
And with his breath he maketh the red pale,
And fills with blood faint faces of men dead,
And with the sound between his lips are fed
Iron and fire and the white body o snow,
And blossom of all trees in places lo
And small bright herbs about the litt hills,
And fruit pricked softly with bird tender bills,
And flight of foam about green fiel of sea,
And fourfold strength of the gre winds that be
Moved always outward from benea his feet,
And growth of grass and growth sheaved wheat
And all green flower of goodly-growi lands;
And all these things he gathers wi his hands,
And covers all their beauty with h wings:
The same, even God that governs a these things,
Hath set my feet to be upon his ways
Now, therefore, for no painfulness days
I shall put off this service bound me.
Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,
How God was in his flesh full cha and meek,
And gave his face to shame, and eith cheek
Gave up to smiting of men tyrannou
And here with a great voice t Gabalus
Cried out and said: By God's blo and his bones,
This were good game betwixen nig and nones
For one to sit and hearken to su saws:
I were as lief fall in some big beas jaws
As hear these women's jaw-teeth ch tering;
By God a woman is the harder thing
One may not put a hook into h mouth.
Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrou
For all these saws, I must needs dri again;
But I pray God deliver all us men

From all such noise of women and their heat.
That is a noble scripture, well I weet,
That likens women to an empty can;
When God said that, he was a full wise man.
I trow no man may blame him as for that.
And herewithal he drank a draught, and spat,
And said: Now shall I make an end hereof.
Come near, all men, and hearken for God's love,
And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God wot.
And spake as thus with mouth full thick and hot:
But thou do this, thou shalt be shortly slain.
Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this pain
I take in penance of my bitter sins.
Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game begins.
Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.
Lo, this is she that would not look on man
Between her fingers folded in thwart wise.
See how her shame hath smitten in her eyes
That was so clean, she had not heard of shame.
Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,
This two years back I was not so well pleased.
This were good mirth for sick men to be eased,
And rise up whole and laugh at hearing of.
I pray thee, show us something of thy love,
Since thou wast maid thy gown is waxen wide.
Yea, maid I am, she said, and somewhat sighed,
As one who thought upon the low fair house
Where she sat working, with soft bended brows
Watching her threads, among the school-maidens.
And she thought well, now God had brought her thence,
She should not come to sew her gold again.
Then cried King Galabus upon his men
To have her forth, and draw her with steel gins.
And as a man hag-ridden beats and grins,
And bends his body sidelong in his bed,
So wagged he with his body and knave's head,
Gaping at her, and blowing with his breath.
And in good time he gat an evil death
Out of his lewdness with his cursèd wives:
His bones were hewn asunder as with knives
For his misliving, certes it is said.
But all the evil wrought upon this maid,
It were full hard for one to handle it.
For her soft blood was shed upon her feet,
And all her body's color bruised and faint.
But she, as one abiding God's great saint,
Spake not nor wept for all this travail hard.
Wherefore the king commanded afterward
To slay her presently in all men's sight.
And it was now an hour upon the night,
And winter-time, and a few stars began.
The weather was yet feeble and all wan
For beating of a weighty wind and snow.
And she came walking in soft wise and slow,
And many men with faces piteous.
Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,
That swore full hard into his drunken beard;
And faintly after without any word
Came Theophile some paces off the king.
And in the middle of this wayfaring
Full tenderly beholding her he said:
There is no word of comfort with men dead,

Nor any face and color of things sweet;
But always with lean cheeks and lifted feet
These dead men lie all aching to the blood
With bitter cold, their brows withouten hood
Beating for chill, their bodies swathed full thin:
Alas! what hire shall any have herein
To give his life and get such bitterness?
Also the soul going forth bodiless
Is hurt with naked cold, and no man saith
If there be house or covering for death
To hide the soul that is discomforted.
Then she beholding him a little said:
Alas! fair lord, ye have no wit of this;
For on one side death is full poor of bliss,
And, as ye say, full sharp of bone and lean;
But on the other side is good and green,
And hath soft flower of tender-colored hair
Grown on his head, and a red mouth as fair
As may be kissed with lips; thereto his face
Is as God's face, and in a perfect place
Full of all sun and color of straight boughs,
And waterheads about a painted house
That hath a mile of flowers either way
Outward from it, and blossom-grass of May
Thickening on many a side for length of heat,
Hath God set death upon a noble seat
Covered with green and flowered in the fold,
In likeness of a great king grown full old
And gentle with new temperance of blood;
And on his brows a purfled purple hood,
They may not carry any golden thing;
And plays some tune with subtle fingering
On a small cithern, full of tears and sleep,
And heavy pleasure that is quick to weep,
And sorrow with the honey in her mouth;
And for this might of music that he doth,
Are all souls drawn toward him with great love,
And weep for sweetness of the noise thereof,
And bow to him with worship of their knees;
And all the field is thick with companies
Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms and lutes,
And gather honey of the yellow fruits
Between the branches waxen soft and wide;
And all this peace endures in either side
Of the green land, and God beholdeth all.
And this is girdled with a round fair wall
Made of red stone, and cool with heavy leaves
Grown out against it, and green blossom cleaves
To the green chinks, and lesser wall-weed sweet,
Kissing the crannies that are split with heat,
And branches where the summer draws to head.
And Theophile burnt in the cheek, and said:
Yea, could one see it, this were marvellous.
I pray you, at your coming to this house,
Give me some leaf of all those tree-branches;
Seeing how sharp and white our weather is,
There is no green nor gracious red to see.
Yea, sir, she said, that shall I certainly.
And from her long sweet throat without a fleck
Undid the gold, and through her stretched-out neck
The cold axe clove, and smote away her head:
Out of her throat the tender blood full red

Fell suddenly through all her long soft hair.
And with good speed for hardness of the air
Each man departed to his house again.
Lo! as fair color in the face of men
At seed-time of their blood, or in such wise
As a thing seen increaseth in men's eyes,
Caught first far off by sickly fits of sight, —
So a word said, if one shall hear aright,
Abides against the season of its growth.
This Theophile went slowly, as one doth
That is not sure for sickness of his feet;
And, counting the white stonework of the street,
Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and love,
Making him weep more for the shame thereof
Than for true pain: so went he half a mile.
And women mocked him, saying: Theophile,
Lo, she is dead; what shall a woman have
That loveth such an one? so Christ me save,
I were as lief to love a man new-hung.
Surely this man has bitten on his tongue,
This makes him sad and writhled in his face.
And when they came upon the paven place
That was called sometime the place amorous,
There came a child before Theophilus,
Bearing a basket, and said suddenly:
Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy
That sends you gifts; and with this he was gone.
In all this earth there is not such an one
For color and straight stature made so fair.
The tender growing gold of his pure hair
Was as wheat growing, and his mouth as flame.
God called him Holy after his own name.
With gold cloth like fire burning he was clad.
But for the fair green basket that he had,
It was filled up with heavy white and red;
Great roses stained still where the first rose bled,
Burning at heart for shame their heart withholds;
And the sad color of strong marigolds
That have the sun to kiss their lips for love;
The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,
The color of fair apples in the sun,
Late peaches gathered when the heat was done,
And the slain air got breath; and after these
The fair faint-headed poppies drunk with ease,
And heaviness of hollow lilies red.
Then cried they all that saw these things, and said
It was God's doing, and was marvellous.
And in brief while this knight Theophilus
Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth
Before the king, of God and love and death,
For which the king bade hang him presently.
A gallows of a goodly piece of tree
This Gabalus hath made to hang him on.
Forth of this world lo Theophile is gone
With a wried neck — God give us better fare
Than his that hath a twisted throat to wear!
But truly for his love God hath him brought
There where his heavy body grieves him nought,
Nor all the people plucking at his feet;
But in his face his lady's face is sweet,

And through his lips her kissing lips are gone.
God send him peace, and joy of such an one!
This is the story of St. Dorothy.
I will you of your mercy pray for me
Because I wrote these sayings for your grace,
That I may one day see her in the face.

THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing
Your tongues forgive me; seeing ye know that spring
Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her sweet,
And walks somewhile with winter-bitten feet.
Moreover it sounds often well to let
One string, when ye play music, keep at fret
The whole song through; one petal that is dead
Confirms the roses, be they white or red;
Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to hear
As the thick noise that breaks mid weeping were;
The sick sound aching in a lifted throat
Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note;
And though the rain falls often, and with rain
Late autumn falls on the old red leaves like pain,
I deem that God is not disquieted.
Also while men are fed with wine and bread,
They shall be fed with sorrow at his hand.
There grew a rose-garden in Florence land
More fair than many; all red summers through
The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of rain, and blew
Sideways with tender wind; and therein fell
Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed audible,
As a bird's will to sing disturbed h throat,
And set the sharp wings forward like boat
Pushed through soft water, moving h brown side
Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shoc with pride
His deep warm bosom, till the hea sun's
Set face of heat stopped all the son at once.
The ways were clean to walk, and de cate;
And when the windy white of Mar grew late,
Before the trees took heart to face t sun
With ravelled raiment of lean wint on,
The roots were thick and hot with h low grass.
Some roods away a lordly hou there was,
Cool with broad courts and lattic passage wet
From rush-flowers and lilies ripe set,
Sown close among the strewings of t floor;
And either wall of the slow corridor
Was dim with deep device of gracio things;
Some angel's steady mouth and weig of wings
Shut to the side; or Peter with straig stole
And beard cut black against the aure
That spanned his head from nape crown; there
Mary's gold hair, thick to the gird tie
Wherein was bound a child with tend feet;
Or the broad cross with blood ni brown on it.
Within this house a righteous lo abode,
Ser Averardo; patient of his mood,
And just of judgment; and to child had
A maid so sweet that her mere sig made glad

Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows
of hate;
And where she came, the lips that pain
made strait
Waxed warm and wide, and from un-
tender grew
Tender as those that sleep brings pa-
tience to.
Such long locks had she, that with knee
to chin
She might have wrapped and warmed
her feet therein.
Right seldom fell her face on weeping
wise;
Gold hair she had, and golden-colored
eyes,
Filled with clear light and fire and large
repose
Like a fair hound's; no man there is
but knows
Her face was white, and thereto she
was tall;
In no wise lacked there any praise at
all
To her most perfect and pure maiden-
hood;
No sin I think there was in all her
blood.
She, where a gold grate shut the roses
in,
Dwelt daily through deep summer
weeks, through green
Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves;
and there
Love made him room and space to
worship her
With tender worship of bowed knees,
and wrought
Such pleasure as the pained sense pal-
ates not
For weariness, but at one taste undoes
The heart of its strong sweet, is raven-
ous
Of all the hidden honey; words and
sense
Fail through the tune's imperious
prevalence.
In a poor house this lover kept apart,
Long communing with patience next
his heart
If love of his might move that face at
all,
Tuned evenwise with colors musical;
Then after length of days he said thus:
"Love,
For love's own sake and for the love
thereof,
Let no harsh words untune your gra-
cious mood;
For good it were, if any thing be
good,
To comfort me in this pain's plague of
mine;
Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor
bread nor wine
Seems pleasant to me, yea no thing
that is
Seems pleasant to me; only I know
this,
Love's ways are sharp for palms of
piteous feet
To travel, but the end of such is sweet:
Now do with me as seemeth you the
best."
She mused a little, as one holds his
guest
By the hand musing, with her face
borne down:
Then said, "Yea, though such bitter
seed be sown,
Have no more care of all that you have
said;
Since if there is no sleep will bind your
head,
Lo, I am fain to help you certainly:
Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have
you die;
There is no pleasure when a man is
dead."
Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow
head,
And clipped her fair long body many
times:
I have no wit to shape in written rhymes
A scanted tithe of this great joy they
had.
They were too near love's secret to
be glad,
As whoso deems the core will surely
melt
From the warm fruit his lips caress,
hath felt
Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut
hard;
Or as sweet music sharpens after-
ward,

Being half disrelished both for sharp and sweet;
As sea-water, having killed over-heat
In a man's body, chills it with faint ache;
So their sense, burdened only for love's sake,
Failed for pure love; yet so time served their wit,
They saved each day some gold reserves of it,
Being wiser in love's riddle than such be
Whom fragments feed with his chance charity.
All things felt sweet were felt sweet overmuch;
The rose-thorn's prickle dangerous to touch,
And flecks of fire in the thin leaf-shadows;
Too keen the breathèd honey of the rose.
Its red too harsh a weight on feasted eyes;
They were so far gone in love's histories,
Beyond all shape and color and mere breath,
Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep and death,
And strength of soul and body waxen blind
For weariness, and flesh entoiled with mind,
When the keen edge of sense foretasteth sin.
Even this green place the summer caught them in
Seemed half deflowered and sick with beaten leaves
In their strayed eyes; these gold flower-fumèd eves
Burnt out to make the sun's love-offering,
The midnoon's prayer, the rose's thanksgiving,
The trees' weight burdening the strengthless air,
The shape of her stilled eyes, her colored hair,
Her body's balance from the moving feet,—
All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain of sweet
It had some warm weeks back: so perisheth
On May's new lip the tender April breath:
So those same walks the wind sowed lilies in
All April through, and all their latter kin
Of languid leaves whereon the autumn blows,—
The dead red raiment of the last year's rose,—
The last year's laurel, and the last year's love,
Fade, and grow things that death grows weary of.
What man will gather in red summer time
The fruit of some obscure and hoary rhyme
Heard last midwinter, taste the heart in it,
Mould the smooth semitones afresh, refit
The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead blood through
With color, make all broken beauties new
For love's new lesson — shall not such find pain
When the marred music laboring in his brain
Frets him with sweet sharp fragments and lets slip
One word that might leave satisfied his lip,—
One touch that might put fire in all the chords?
This was her pain: to miss from all sweet words
Some taste of sound, diverse and delicate,—
Some speech the old love found out to compensate
For seasons of shut lips and drowsiness;
Some grace, some word the old love found out to bless
Passionless months and undelighted weeks.
The flowers had lost their summer scented cheeks,

Their lips were no more sweet than daily breath:
The year was plagued with instances of death.
So fell it, these were sitting in cool grass
With leaves about, and many a bird there was
Where the green shadow thickliest impleached
Soft fruit and writhen spray and blossom bleached
Dry in the sun or washed with rains to white:
Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom bright
With purple as purple water and gold wrought in.
One branch had touched with dusk her lips and chin,
Made violet of the throat, abashed with shade
The breast's bright plaited work: but nothing frayed
The sun's large kiss on the luxurious hair.
Her beauty was new color to the air,
And music to the silent many birds.
Love was an-hungered for some perfect words
To praise her with; but only her low name
"Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice put shame
In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new red
That for pure love straightway shame's self was dead.
Then with lids gathered as who late had wept,
She began saying, "I have so little slept,
My lids drowse now against the very sun;
Yea, the brain aching with a dream begun
Beats like a fitful blood; kiss but both brows,
And you shall pluck my thoughts grown dangerous
Almost away." He said thus, kissing them:
"O sole sweet thing that God is glad to name,
My one gold gift, if dreams be sharp and sore
Shall not the waking time increase much more
With taste and sound, sweet eyesight or sweet scent?
Has any heat too hard and insolent
Burnt bare the tender married leaves, undone
The maiden grass shut under from the sun?
Where in this world is room enough for pain?"
The feverish finger of love had touched again
Her lips with happier blood; the pain lay meek
In her fair face, nor altered lip nor cheek
With pallor or with pulse; but in her mouth
Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,
Making it humble as weak hunger is.
She lay close to him, bade do this and this,
Say that, sing thus: then almost weeping-ripe
Crouched, then laughed low. As one that fain would wipe
The old record out of old things done and dead,
She rose, she heaved her hands up, and waxed red
For wilful heart and blameless fear of blame;
Saying, "Though my wits be weak, this is no shame
For a poor maid whom love so punisheth
With heats of hesitation and stopped breath
That with my dreams I live yet heavily
For pure sad heart and faith's humility.
Now be not wroth, and I will show you this.
"Methought our lips upon their second kiss
Met in this place, and a fair day we had,
And fair soft leaves that waxed and were not sad

With shaken rain, or bitten through with drouth;
When I, beholding ever how your mouth
Waited for mine, the throat being fallen back,
Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked with black
Specks of brute slime and leper-colored scale,
A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen grail
Fashioned where hell's heat festers loathsomest;
And that brief speech may ease me of the rest,
Thus were you slain and eaten of the thing.
My waked eyes felt the new day shuddering
On their low lids, felt the whole east so beat,
Pant with close pulse of such a plague-struck heat,
As if the palpitating dawn drew breath
For horror, breathing between life and death,
Till the sun sprang blood-bright and violent."
So finishing, her soft strength wholly spent,
She gazed each way, lest some brute-hoovèd thing,
The timeless travail of hell's child-bearing,
Should threat upon the sudden: whereat he,
For relish of her tasted misery
And tender little thornprick of her pain,
Laughed with mere love. What lover among men
But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt whiles
With tears and covered eyelids and sick smiles
And soft disaster of a painèd face?
What pain established in so sweet a place,
But the plucked leaf of it smells fragrantly?
What color burning man's wide-open eye
But may be pleasurably seen? what sense
Keeps in its hot sharp extreme violence
No savor of sweet things? The bereaved blood
And emptied flesh in their most broken mood
Fail not so wholly, famish not when thus
Past honey keeps the starved lip covetous.
Therefore this speech from a glad mouth began,
Breathed in her tender hair and temples wan
Like one prolonged kiss while the lips had breath:
"Sleep, that abides in vassalage of death
And in death's service wears out hair his age,
Hath his dreams full of deadly vassalage,
Shadow and sound of things ungracious;
Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless brows,
And mouths past kissing; yea, myself have had
As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids sad.
"This dream I tell you came three nights ago:
In full mid sleep I took a whim to know
How sweet things might be; so I turned and thought;
But save my dream all sweet availed me not.
First came a smell of pounded spice and scent
Such as God ripens in some continent
Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea;
And breaths as though some costly rose could be
Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter fire
To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and tire
The flower's poor heart with heat and waste, to make
Strong magic for some perfumed woman's sake.

Then a cool naked sense beneath my feet
Of bud and blossom; and sound of veins that beat
As if a lute should play of its own heart
And fearfully, not smitten of either part;
And all my blood it filled with sharp and sweet
As gold swoln grain fills out the huskèd wheat;
So I rose naked from the bed, and stood
Counting the mobile measure in my blood
Some pleasant while, and and through each limb there came
Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame,
Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as much
As the outer curls that feel the comb's first touch
Thrill to the roots and shiver as from fire;
And blind between my dream and my desire
I seemed to stand, and held my spirit still
Lest this should cease. A child whose fingers spill
Honey from cells forgotten of the bee
Is less afraid to stir the hive and see
Some wasp's bright back inside, than I to feel
Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like steel.
I prayed thus: Let me catch a secret here
So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of fear,
And takes the mouth with edge of wine; I would
Have here some color and smooth shape as good
As those in heaven whom the chief garden hides
With low grape-blossom veiling their white sides,
And lesser tendrils that so bind and blind
Their eyes and feet, that if one come behind
To touch their hair they see not, neither fly;
This would I see in heaven, and not die.
So praying, I had nigh cried out and knelt,
So wholly my prayer filled me: till I felt
In the dumb night's warm weight of glowing gloom
Somewhat that altered all my sleeping-room,
And made it like a green low place wherein
Maids mix to bathe: one sets her small warm chin
Against a ripple, that the angry pearl
May flow like flame about her: the next curl
Dips in some eddy colored of the sun
To wash the dust well out; another one
Holds a straight ankle in her hand and swings
With lavish body sidelong, so that rings
Of sweet fierce water, swollen and splendid, fail
All round her fine and floated body pale,
Swayed flower-fashion, and her balanced side
Swerved edgeways lets the weight of water slide,
As taken in some underflow of sea
Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers; but she
Pulls down some branch to keep her perfect head
Clear of the river: even from wall to bed,
I tell you, was my room transfigured so.
Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could one know
If there were walls or leaves, or if there was
No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle grass.
There were set also hard against the feet
Gold plates with honey and green grapes to eat,
With the cool water's noise to hear in rhymes:
And a wind warmed me full of furze and limes

And all hot sweets the heavy summer fills
To the round brim of smooth cup-shapen hills.
Next the grave walking of a woman's feet
Made my veins hesitate, and gracious heat
Made thick the lids and leaden on mine eyes:
And I thought ever, surely it were wise
Not yet to see her: this may last (who knows?)
Five minutes; the poor rose is twice a rose
Because it turns a face to her, the wind
Sings that way; hath this woman ever sinned,
I wonder? as a boy with apple-rind,
I played with pleasures, made them to my mind,
Changed each ere tasting. When she came indeed,
First her hair touched me, then I grew to feed
On the sense of her hand; her mouth at last
Touched me between the cheek and lip, and past
Over my face with kisses here and there
Sown in and out across the eyes and hair.
Still I said nothing; till she set her face
More close and harder on the kissing-place,
And her mouth caught like a snake's mouth, and stung
So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce clung
More than a bird's foot: yet a wound it grew,
A great one, let this red mark witness you
Under the left breast; and the stroke thereof
So clove my sense that I woke out of love,
And knew not what this dream was, nor had wit;
But now God knows if I have skill of it."

Hereat she laid one palm against he lips
To stop their trembling; as when wate slips
Out of a beak-mouthed vessel wit faint noise,
And chuckles in the narrowed throa and cloys
The carven rims with murmuring, s came
Words in her lips with no word right o them,
A beaten speech thick and disconsolate
Till his smile ceasing waxed compas sionate
Of her sore fear that grew from an thing, —
The sound of the strong summer thick ening
In heated leaves of the smooth appl trees:
The day's breath felt about the as branches,
And noises of the noon whose weigh still grew
On the hot heavy-headed flowers, an drew
Their red mouths open till the ros heart ached;
For eastward all the crowding rose wa slaked
And soothed with shade: but westwar all its growth
Seemed to breathe hard with heat as man doth
Who feels his temples newly feverous
And even with such motion in he brows
As that man hath in whom sick da begin,
She turned her throat and spake, he voice being thin
As a sick man's, sudden and tremulous
"Sweet, if this end be come indeed on u
Let us love more;" and held his mout with hers.
As the first sound of flooded hill-wate
Is heard by people of the meadow-gras
Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pa
With whirling stones and foam of th brown stream
Flaked with fierce yellow: so behol ing him

She felt before tears came her eyelids wet,
Saw the face deadly thin where life was yet,
Heard his throat's harsh last moan before it clomb:
And he, with close mouth passionate and dumb,
Burned at her lips: so lay they without speech,
Each grasping other, and the eyes of each
Fed in the other's face: till suddenly
He cried out with a little broken cry
This word, "O help me, sweet, I am but dead!"
And even so saying, the color of fair red
Was gone out of his face, and his blood's beat
Fell, and stark death made sharp his upward feet
And pointed hands; and without moan he died.
Pain smote her sudden in the brows and side,
Strained her lips open, and made burn her eyes:
For the pure sharpness of her miseries
She had no heart's pain, but mere body's wrack.
But at the last her beaten blood drew back
Slowly upon her face, and her stunned brows
Suddenly grown aware and piteous
Gathered themselves, her eyes shone, her hard breath
Came as though one nigh dead came back from death;
Her lips throbbed, and life trembled through her hair.
And in brief while she thought to bury there
The dead man, that her love might lie with him
In a sweet bed under the rose-roots dim
And soft earth round the branchèd apple-trees,
Full of hushed heat and heavy with great ease,
And no man entering divide him thence.
Wherefore she bade one of her handmaidens
To be her help to do upon this wise.
And saying so the tears out of her eyes
Fell without noise, and comforted her heart:
Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest part
Began to soften in her sense of it.
There under all the little branches sweet
The place was shapen of his burial:
They shed thereon no thing funereal,
But colored leaves of latter rose-blossom,
Stems of soft grass, some withered red and some
Fair and flesh-blooded; and spoil splendider
Of marigold and great spent sunflower.
And afterwards she came back without word
To her own house; two days went, and the third
Went, and she showed her father of this thing.
And for great grief of her soul's travailing
He gave consent she should endure in peace
Till her life's end; yea, till her time should cease,
She should abide in fellowship of pain.
And having lived a holy year or twain
She died of pure waste heart and weariness.
And for love's honor in her love's distress
This word was written over her tomb's head:
"Here dead she lieth, for whose sake Love is dead."

AHOLIBAH.

In the beginning God made thee
A woman well to look upon,
Thy tender body as a tree
Whereon cool wind hath always blown
Till the clean branches be well grown.

There was none like thee in the land;
The girls that were thy bondwomen
Did bind thee with a purple band
Upon thy forehead, that all men
Should know thee for God's handmaiden.

Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,
With silk to wear on hands and feet,
And plates of gold on either side:
Wine made thee glad, and thou didst eat
Honey, and choice of pleasant meat.

And fishers in the middle sea
Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds
In color like the robes on thee;
And curious work of plated reeds,
And wools wherein live purple bleeds.

And round the edges of thy cup
Men wrought thee marvels out of gold,
Strong snakes with lean throats lifted up,
Large eyes whereon the brows had hold,
And scaly things their slime kept cold.

For thee they blew soft winds in flutes,
And ground sweet roots for cunning scent;
Made slow because of many lutes,
The wind among thy chambers went
Wherein no light was violent.

God called thy name Aholibah,
His tabernacle being in thee,
A witness through waste Asia;
Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly
With gold and colors of the sea.

God gave thee gracious ministers
And all their work who plait and weave:
The cunning of embroiderers
That sew the pillow to the sleeve,
And likeness of all things that live.

Thy garments upon thee were fair
With scarlet and with yell
thread;
Also the weaving of thine hair
Was as fine gold upon thy head,
And thy silk shoes were sewn wi
red.

All sweet things he bade sift, a
ground
As a man grindeth wheat in mill
With strong wheels alway going roun
He gave thee corn, and grass th
fills
The cattle on a thousand hills.

The wine of many seasons fed
Thy mouth, and made it fair a
clean;
Sweet oil was poured out on thy hea
And ran down like cool rain
tween
The strait close locks it melted i

The strong men and the captains kne
Thy chambers wrought and fas
ioned
With gold and covering of blue,
And the blue raiment of thine he
Who satest on a stately bed.

All these had on their garments wroug
The shape of beasts and creepi
things.
The body that availeth not,
Flat backs of worms and vein
wings,
And the lewd bulk that sleeps a
stings.

Also the chosen of the years,
The multitude being at ease,
With sackbuts and with dulcimers
And noise of shawms and psalteri
Made mirth within the ears of the

But as a common woman doth,
Thou didst think evil and devise
The sweet smell of thy breast a
mouth,
Thou madest as the harlot's wis
And there was painting on thi
eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber
And by the painted passages
Where the strange, gracious paintings were,
State upon state of companies,
There came on thee the lust of these.

Because of shapes on either wall
Sea-colored from some rare blue shell
At many a Tyrian interval,
Horsemen on horses, girdled well,
Delicate and desirable, —

Thou saidest: I am sick of love:
Stay with me flagons, comfort me
With apples, for my pain thereof,
Till my hands gather in his tree
That fruit wherein my lips would be.

Yea, saidest thou, I will go up
When there is no more shade than one
May cover with a hollow cup,
And make my bed against the sun
Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall
Against the painted mouth, thy chin
Touched the hair's painted curve and fall;
Thy deep throat, fallen lax and thin,
Worked as the blood's beat worked therein.

Therefore, O thou Aholibah,
God is not glad because of thee;
And thy fine gold shall pass away
Like those fair coins of ore that be
Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare
To strip it of all gracious things,
And pluck the cover from thine hair,
And break the gift of many kings,
Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins
To thy smooth body, as was said,
Who hath a girdle on his loins,
And dyed attire upon his head, —
The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face
Of a clean maiden that smells sweet,
Because thy gait was as the pace
Of one that opens not her feet,
And is not heard within the street:

Even he, O thou Aholibah,
Made separate from thy desire,
Shall cut thy nose and ears away,
And bruise thee for thy body's hire,
And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say,
The multitude being at ease;
Lo, this is that Aholibah
Whose name was blown among strange seas,
Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,
Her windows beautiful for glass,
That she had made her bed between:
Yea, for pure lust her body was
Made like white summer-colored grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil;
Upon a table by a bed
She set mine incense and mine oil
To be the beauty of her head,
In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had
Fair faces of strong men portrayed;
All girded round the loins, and clad
With several cloths of woven braid
And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be
Set as a watch upon her way;
And whoso findeth by the sea
Blown dust of bones will hardly say
If this were that Aholibah.

MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple-boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain,
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand:
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep
Love lying seems asleep,
Love, swift to wake, to weep,
To laugh, to gaze;
Her breasts are like white birds,
And all her gracious words
As water-grass to herds
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
And rains are musical;
Her flowers are fed from all,
Her joy from these;
In the deep-feathered firs
Their gift of joy is hers,
In the least breath that stirs
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
Ripens with reddest sheaves,
Forgets, remembers, grieves,
And is not sad;

The quiet lands and skies
Leave light upon her eyes:
None knows her, weak or wise,
Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
What flowers are like her hands;
Though you should search all lands
Wherein time grows,
What snows are like her feet,
Though his eyes burn with heat
Through gazing on my sweet,
Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said:
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
And various vine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
In sunset lands.
This was my lady's birth:
God gave her might and mirth,
And laid his whole sweet earth
Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
Being strong as love.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

WE were ten maidens in the green cor
Small red leaves in the mill-water:
Fairer maidens never were born,
Apples of gold for the king's daug
ter.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,
Small white birds in the mill-water:
Sweeter maidens never were wed,
Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,
Seeds of wheat in the mill-water;
The third may was a goodly thing,
White bread and brown for the king's daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,
Fair green weed in the mill-water;
The sixth may was a goodly may,
White wine and red for the king's daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,
Fair thin reeds in the mill-water;
The ninth had gold work on her head,
Honey in the comb for the king's daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her hair,
Fallen flowers in the mill-water;
The tenth may was goodly and fair,
Golden gloves for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,
Fallen fruit in the mill-water:
Fairer maidens never have been,
Golden sleeves for the king's daughter.

By there comes the king's young son,
A little wind in the mill-water;
"Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"
A crown of red for the king's daughter.

"Out of ten mays ye'll give me the best,"
A little rain in the mill-water;
A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,
A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en out the goodliest,
Rain that rains in the mill-water;
A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,
A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,
Wind and hail in the mill-water;
A grass girdle for all the rest,
A girdle of arms for the king's daughter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,
Snow that snows in the mill-water;
Nine little kisses for all the rest,
An hundredfold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,
Broken boats in the mill-water;
Golden gifts for all the rest,
Sorrow of heart for the king's daughter.

"Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,"
Running rain in the mill-water;
"And ye'll streek my brother at the side of me,"
The pains of hell for the king's daughter.

MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

"STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And go to the wars with me."
He's drawn her by both hands,
With her face against the sea.

"He that strews red shall gather white,
He that sows white reap red,
Before your face and my daughter's
Meet in a marriage-bed.

"Gold coin shall grow in the yellow field,
Green corn in the green sea-water,
And red fruit grow of the rose's red,
Ere your fruit grow in her."

"But I shall have her by land," he said,
"Or I shall have her by sea,
Or I shall have her by strong treason
And no grace go with me."

Her father's drawn her by both hands,
He's rent her gown from her,
He's ta'en the smock round her body,
Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides
Out of the fair green sea:
"Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,
And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to,
There was a blue bride-chamber;
He clothed her on with silk,
And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to,
The bridesmen feasted knee to knee;
He clothed her on with silver,
A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to,
The bridesmaids all had gowns of gold;
He clothed her on with purple,
A rich thing to behold.

The last town they came to,
He clothed her white and red,
With a green flag either side of her
And a gold flag overhead.

THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae late,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
O where have ye been the morn sae late?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"By the water-gate, by the water-gate,
O dear mither."

"And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there to make,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And whatten kin' o' wark had ye there to make?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I watered my steeds with water frae the lake,
O dear mither."

"Why is your coat sae fouled the day,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
Why is your coat sae fouled the day?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"The steeds wer stamping sair by the weary banks of clay,
O dear mither."

"And where gat ye thae sleeves o red,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where gat ye thae sleeves of red?
And I wot I hae but anither."
"I have slain my ae brither by the weary water-head,
O dear mither."

"And where will ye gang to mak you mend,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And where will ye gang to mak you mend?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The warldis way, to the warldis end,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your fathe dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your fathe dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The wood to fell and the logs to bea
For he'll never see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your mithe dear,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your mithe dear?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"The wool to card and the wool t wear,
For ye'll never see my body mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave for your wif to take,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave for your wife t take?
And I wot I hae not anither."

"A goodly gown and a fair new make,
For she'll do nae mair for my body's sake,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your young son fair,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your young son fair?
And I wot ye hae not anither."
"A twiggen school-rod for his body to bear,
Though it garred him greet he'll get nae mair,
O dear mither."

"And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet?
And I wot ye hae not anither."
"Wild mulberries for her mouth to eat,
She'll get nae mair though it garred her greet,
O dear mither."

"And when will ye come back frae roamin',
My merry son, come tell me hither?
And when will ye come back frae roamin'?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"When the sunrise out of the north is comen,
O dear mither."

"When shall the sunrise on the north side be,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall the sunrise on the north side be?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"When chuckie-stanes shall swim in the sea,
O dear mither."

"When shall stanes in the sea swim,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall stanes in the sea swim?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"When birdies' feathers are as lead therein,
O dear mither."

"When shall feathers be as lead,
My merry son, come tell me hither?
When shall feathers be as lead?
And I wot I hae not anither."
"When God shall judge between the quick and dead,
O dear mither."

THE SEA-SWALLOWS

THIS fell when Christmas lights were done,
Red rose leaves will never make wine;
But before the Easter lights begun;
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows,
And all the grass is heavy and fine,
By the gathering place of the sea-swallows
When the wind brings them over Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make bread,
Red rose leaves will never make wine;
Between her brows she is grown red,
That was full white in the fields by Tyne.

"O what is this thing ye have on,
Show me now, sweet daughter of mine?"
"O father, this is my little son
That I found hid in the sides of Tyne.

"O what will ye give my son to eat,
Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
"Fen-water and adder's meat,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye get my son to wear,
Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
"A weed and a web of nettle's hair,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye take to line his bed,
Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
"Two black stones at the kirk-wall's head,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye give my son for land,
Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
"Three girl's paces of red sand,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne."

"Or what will ye give me for my son,
Red rose leaves will never make wine?"
"Six times to kiss his young mouth on,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.

"But what have ye done with the bearing-bread,
And what have ye made of the washing-wine?
Or where have ye made your bearing-bed,
To bear a son in the sides of Tyne?"

"The bearing-bread is soft and new,
There is no soil in the straining wine;
The bed was made between green and blue,
It stands full soft by the sides of Tyne.

"The fair grass was my bearing-bread,
The well-water my washing-wine;
The low leaves were my bearing-bed,
And that was best in the sides of Tyne."

"O daughter, if ye have done this thing,
I wot the greater grief is mine;
This was a bitter child-bearing,
When ye were got by the sides o
Tyne.

"About the time of sea-swallows
That fly full thick by six and nine,
Ye'll have my body out of the house,
To bury me by the sides of Tyne.

"Set nine stones by the wall for twain
Red rose leaves will never mak
wine;
For the bed I take will measure ten,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to th
Tyne.

"Tread twelve girl's paces out fo
three,
Red rose leaves will never mak
wine;
For the pit I made has taken me,
The ways are sair fra' the Till to th
Tyne."

THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by on
Following the seasons and the sun,
Passed over without tears, and fell
Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,
The next of aspen-leaves and fears,
The third of rose-boughs and rose-root
The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Ho
Some minutes fast the time of gold
When our lips each way clung ar
clove
To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,
Wrung forth with kissing, and wept w
The faces cleaving each to each
Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows
Bound under aspen-colored boughs
And eyes made strong and grave wi
sleep
And yet too weak to weep;

The third, with eager mouth at ease
Fed from late autumn honey, lees
Of scarce gold left in latter cells
With scattered flower-smells, —

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet
Of ruined roses, wrists and feet
Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled sheaves
Hold in stray poppy-leaves;

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled
Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed
From the rank bitter husk whence drips
Faint blood between her lips, —

Made of the heat of whole great Junes
Burning the blue dark round their moons
(Each like a mown red marigold),
So hard the flame keeps hold, —

These are burnt thoroughly away.
Only the first holds out a day
Beyond these latter loves that were
Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is winterly
The first love fades too: none will see,
When April warms the world anew,
The place wherein love grew.

THE LAST ORACLE.

(A. D. 361.)

Εἰπατε τῷ βασιλῆι, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά·
οὐκετι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλύβαν, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην,
οὐ παγὰν λαλέουσαν· ἀπέσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

YEARS have risen and fallen in darkness or in twilight,
Ages waxed and waned that knew not thee nor thine,
White the world sought light by night and sought not thy light,
Since the sad last pilgrim left thy dark mid shrine.
Dark the shrine, and dumb the fount of song thence welling,
Save for words more sad than tears of blood, that said:
Tell the king, on earth has fallen the glorious dwelling,
And the water-springs that spake are quenched and dead.
Not a cell is left the god, no roof, no cover;
In his hand the prophet laurel flowers no more.
And the great king's high sad heart, thy true last lover,
Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it to the core.
And he bowed down his hopeless head
In the drift of the wild world's tide,
And dying, *Thou hast conquered*, he said,
Galilæan; he said it, and died.
And the world that was thine and was ours
When the Graces took hands with the Hours
Grew cold as a winter wave
In the wind from a wide-mouthed grave,
As a gulf wide open to swallow
The light that the world held dear.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy face was hidden,
And the lips and eyes that loved thee blind and dumb;
Song forsook their tongues that held thy name forbidden,
Light their eyes that saw the strange god's kingdom come.
Fire for light and hell for heaven and psalms for pæans
Filled the clearest eyes and lips most sweet of song,
When for chant of Greeks the wail of Galilæans
Made the whole world moan with hymns of wrath and wrong.
Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they saw thee,
They that worshipped when the world was theirs and thine,
They whose words had power by thine own power to draw thee
Down from heaven till earth seemed more than heaven divine.

For the shades are about us that hover
When darkness is half withdrawn,
And the skirts of the dead night cover
The face of the live new dawn.
For the past is not utterly past,
Though the word on its lips be the last,
And the time be gone by with its creed
When men were as beasts that bleed,
As sheep or as swine that wallow,
In the shambles of faith and of fear.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Yet it may be, lord and father, could we know it,
We that love thee for our darkness shall have light
More than ever prophet hailed of old, or poet
Standing crowned and robed and sovereign in thy sight.
To the likeness of one God their dreams enthralled thee,
Who wast greater than all gods that waned and grew;
Son of God the shining son of Time they called thee,
Who wast older, O our father, than they knew.
For no thought of man made gods to love or honor
Ere the song within the silent soul began;
Nor might earth in dream or deed take heaven upon her
Till the word was clothed with speech by lips of man.
And the word and the life wast thou,
The spirit of man and the breath;
And before thee the gods that bow
Take life at thine hands and death.
For these are as ghosts that wane,
That are gone in an age or twain;
Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,
They perish, but thou shalt endure;
Be their life as the swan's or the swallow,
They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Thou the word, the light, the life, th
breath, the glory,
Strong to help and heal, to lighte
and to slay,
Thine is all the song of man, the world'
whole story;
Not of morning and of evening is th
day.
Old and younger gods are buried o
begotten
From uprising to downsetting of th
sun,
Risen from eastward, fallen to westwar
and forgotten,
And their springs are many, but thei
end is one.
Divers births of godheads find on
death appointed,
As the soul whence each was bor
makes room for each;
God by god goes out, discrowned an
disanointed,
But the soul stands fast that gav
them shape and speech.
Is the sun yet cast out of heaven?
Is the song yet cast out of man?
Life that had song for its leaven
To quicken the blood that ran
Through the veins of the songles
years
More bitter and cold than tears;
Heaven that had thee for its one
Light, life, word, witness, O sun,—
Are they soundless and sightless an
hollow,
Without eye, without speech, wit
out ear?
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Time arose, and smote thee silent
his warning;
Change and darkness fell on men th
fell from thee;
Dark thou satest, veiled with light, b
hind the morning,
Till the soul of man should lift u
eyes and see.
Till the blind mute soul get speec
again and eyesight,

Man may worship not the light of life within;
In his sight the stars whose fires grow dark in thy sight
Shine as sunbeams on the night of death and sin.
Time again is risen with mightier word of warning,
Change hath blown again a blast of louder breath;
Clothed with clouds and stars and dreams that melt in morning,
Lo, the gods that ruled by grace of sin and death!
They are conquered, they break, they are stricken,
Whose might made the whole world pale;
They are dust that shall rise not or quicken
Though the world for their death's sake wail.
As a hound on a wild beast's trace,
So time has their godhead in chase;
As wolves when the hunt makes head,
They are scattered, they fly, they are fled;
They are fled beyond hail, beyond hollo,
And the cry of the chase, and the cheer.
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven beholden,
Even the sun, the shining shadow of thy face:
King, the ways of heaven before thy feet grow golden;
God, the soul of earth is kindled with thy grace.
In thy lips the speech of man whence gods were fashioned,
In thy soul the thought that makes them and unmakes;
By thy light and heat incarnate and impassioned,
Soul to soul of man gives light for light, and takes.
As they knew thy name of old time could we know it,
Healer called of sickness, slayer invoked of wrong,
Light of eyes that saw thy light, god, king, priest, poet,
Song should bring thee back to heal us with thy song.
For thy kingdom is past not away,
Nor thy power from the place thereof hurled:
Out of heaven they shall cast not the day,
They shall cast not out song from the world.
By the song and the light they give,
We know thy works that they live;
With the gift thou hast given us of speech
We praise, we adore, we beseech,
We arise at thy bidding, and follow,
We cry to thee, answer, appear,
O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,
Destroyer and healer, hear!

IN THE BAY.

I.

Beyond the hollow sunset, ere a star
Take heart in heaven from eastward, while the west,
Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest,
Is as a port with clouds for harbor-bar
To fold the fleet in of the winds from far
That stir no plume now of the bland sea's breast;

II.

Above the soft sweep of the breathless bay
South-westward, far past flight of night and day,
Lower than the sunken sunset sinks, and higher
Than dawn can freak the front of heaven with fire,—
My thought with eyes and wings made wide makes way
To find the place of souls that I desire.

III.

If any place for any soul there be,
Disrobed and disentrammelled; if the might,
The fire and force that filled with ardent light
The souls whose shadow is half the light we see,
Survive, and be suppressed not of the night,—
This hour should show what all day hid from me.

IV.

Night knows not, neither is it shown to day,
By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown,
Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall known,
Their world's untrodden and unkindled way;
Nor is the breath nor music of it blown
With sounds of winter or with winds of May.

V.

But here, where light and darkness reconciled
Hold earth between them as a weanling child
Between the balanced hands of death and birth,
Even as they held the new-born shape of earth
When first life trembled in her limbs and smiled,—
Here hope might think to find what hope were worth.

VI.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long,
Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe; past the toil
Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,
The Stygian web of waters,—if your song
Be quenched not, O our brethren, but be strong
As ere ye too shook off our temporal coil;

VII.

If yet these twain survive your world
breath,
Joy trampling sorrow, life devouri
death,
If perfect life possess your life
through,
And like your words your souls
deathless too,
To-night, of all whom night encompas
eth,
My soul would commune with one so
of you.

VIII.

Above the sunset, might I see thi
eyes
That were above the sun-dawn in o
skies,
Son of the songs of morning,—thi
that were
First lights to lighten that rekindli
air
Wherethrough men saw the front
England rise,
And heard thine loudest of the ly
notes there,—

IX.

If yet thy fire have not one spark t
less,
O Titan, born of her a Titaness,
Across the sunrise and the sunse
mark
Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire o
spark,
To change this face of our unwort
ness,
Across this hour dividing light fr
dark;

X.

To change this face of our chill tin
that hears
No song like thine of all that cro
its ears,
Of all its lights that lighten all day lo
Sees none like thy most fleet and fi
sphere's
Out-lightening Sirius,—in its twilig
throng,
No thunder and no sunrise like t
song.

XI.

Hath not the sea-wind swept the sea-
line bare
To pave with stainless fire, through
stainless air,
A passage for thine heavenlier feet to
tread
Ungrieved of earthly floor-work? hath
it spread
To covering splendid as the sun-god's
hair
To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head?

XII.

Hath not the sunset strewn across the
sea
A way majestical enough for thee?
What hour save this should be thine
hour — and mine,
If thou have care of any less divine
Than thine own soul; if thou take
thought of me,
Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought
of thine?

XIII.

Before the moon's face as before the
sun,
The morning star and evening star are
one
For all men's lands as England. Oh, if
night
Sang hard upon us, — ere our day take
flight,
Need thou some comfort from thy day
long done
In us pale children of the latter light!

XIV.

For surely, brother and master, and
lord and king,
Where'er thy footfall and thy face
make spring
In all souls' eyes that meet thee where-
soe'er,
And have thy soul for sunshine and
sweet air, —
Some late love of thine old live land
should cling,
Some living love of England, round
thee there.

XV.

Here from her shore, across her sunni-
est sea,
My soul makes question of the sun for
thee,
And waves and beams make answer.
When thy feet
Made her ways flowerier and their
flowers more sweet
With childlike passage of a god to be,
Like spray these waves cast off her foe-
men's fleet.

XVI.

Like foam they flung it from her, and
like weed
Its wrecks were washed from scornful
shoal to shoal,
From rock to rock reverberate; and
the whole
Sea laughed and lightened with a death-
less deed
That sowed our enemies in her field for
seed,
And made her shores fit harborage for
thy soul.

XVII.

Then in her green south fields, a poor
man's child,
Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of half-
blown joy,
That ripens all of us for time to cloy
With full-blown pain and passion; ere
the wild
World caught thee by the fiery heart,
and smiled
To make so swift end of the godlike
boy.

XVIII.

For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod
These fields of ours, wert surely like a
god.
Who knows what splendor of strange
dreams was shed
With sacred shadow and glimmer of
gold and red
From hallowed windows, over stone and
sod,
On thine unbowed, bright, insubmissive
head?

XIX.

The shadow stayed not, but the splendor stays,
Our brother, till the last of English days.
No day nor night on English earth shall be
Forever, spring nor summer, Junes nor Mays,
But somewhat as a sound or gleam of thee
Shall come on us like morning from the sea.

XX.

Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet
Quenched; or like sunset never wholly set,
A light to lighten as from living eyes
The cold, unlit, close lids of one that lies
Dead, or a ray returned from death's far skies
To fire us living lest our lives forget.

XXI.

For in that heaven what light of lights may be,
What splendor of what stars, what spheres of flame
Sounding, that none may number nor may name,
We know not, even thy brethren; yea, not we
Whose eyes desire the light that lightened thee,
Whose ways and thine are one way and the same.

XXII.

But if the riddles that in sleep we read,
And trust them not, be flattering truth indeed,
As he that rose our mightiest called them, — he,
Much higher than thou as thou much higher than we, —
There, might we say, all flower of all our seed,
All singing souls are as one sounding sea.

XXIII.

All those that here were of thy ki
and kin,
Beside thee and below thee, full of lo
Full-souled for song, — and one alo
above
Whose only light folds all your glor
in —
With all birds' notes from nighting
to dove
Fill the world whither we too fain wo
win;

XXIV.

The world that sees in heaven the so
reign light
Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fi
night
Whose stars were watched of Webst
and beneath,
The twin-souled brethren of the sin
wreath,
Grown in king's gardens, plucked fr
pastoral heath,
Wrought with all flowers for all me
heart's delight.

XXV.

And that fixed fervor, iron-red li
Mars,
In the mid moving tide of tenderer sta
That burned on loves and deeds
darkest done,
Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bri
house bars;
And thine, most highest of all their fi
but one,
Our morning star, sole risen before
sun.

XXVI.

And one light risen since theirs to
such race
Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from
pride of place.
Thou hast seen Shelley, him that
to thee
As light to fire or dawn to lightni
me, —
Me likewise, O our brother, shalt th
see,
And I behold thee, face to glori
face?

XXVII.

You twain the same swift year of manhood swept
Down the steep darkness, and our father wept.
And from the gleam of Apollonian tears
A holier aureole rounds your memories, kept
Most fervent-fresh of all the singing spheres,
And April-colored through all months and years.

XXVIII.

You twain, fate spared not half your fiery span;
The longer date fulfils the lesser man.
Ye from beyond the dark dividing date
Stand smiling, crowned as gods, with foot on fate.
For stronger was your blessing than his ban,
And earliest whom he struck, he struck too late.

XXIX.

Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith yet
Bind less to greater souls in unison,
And one desire that makes three spirits as one
Takes great and small as in one spiritual net
Woven out of hope toward what shall yet be done
Ere hate or love remember or forget;

XXX.

Woven out of faith and hope and love too great
To bear the bonds of life and death and fate;
Woven out of love and hope and faith too dear
To take the print of doubt and change and fear;
And interwoven with lines of wrath and hate
Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine year.

XXXI.

Who cannot hate, can love not: if he grieve,
His tears are barren as the unfruitful rain
That rears no harvest from the green sea's plain,
And as thorns crackling this man's laugh is vain.
Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, reprieve
His heart who has not heart to disbelieve.

XXXII.

But you, most perfect in your hate and love,
Our great twin-spirited brethren; you that stand
Head by head glittering, hand made fast in hand,
And underfoot the fang-drawn worm that strove
To wound you living; from so far above,
Look love, not scorn, on ours that was your land.

XXXIII.

For love we lack, and help and heat and light
To clothe us and to comfort us with might.
What help is ours to take or give? but ye —
Oh, more than sunrise to the blind cold sea,
That wailed aloud with all her waves all night,
Much more, being much more glorious, should you be.

XXXIV.

As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew
To flowerless fields, as sleep to slackening pain,
As hope to souls long weaned from hope again
Returning, or as blood revived anew
To dry-drawn limbs and every pulseless vein, —
Even so toward us should no man be but you.

XXXV.

One rose before the sunrise was, and one
Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun.
And now the heaven is dark and bright
and loud
With wind and starry drift and moon
and cloud,
And night's cry rings in straining sheet
and shroud:
What help is ours if hope like yours
be none?

XXXVI.

O well-beloved, our brethren, if ye be,
Then are we not forsaken. This kind
earth
Made fragrant once for all time with
your birth,
And bright for all men with your love,
and worth
The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the
sea,
Were not your mother if not your
brethren we.

XXXVII.

Because the days were dark with gods
and kings,
And in time's hand the old hours of
time as rods,
When force and fear set hope and faith
at odds,
Ye failed not, nor abased your plume-
plucked wings;
And we that front not more disastrous
things,
How should we fail in face of kings
and gods?

XXXVIII.

For now the deep dense plumes of night
are thinned
Surely with winnowing of the glimmer-
ing wind
Whose feet are fledged with morning;
and the breath
Begins in heaven that sings the dark to
death.
And all the night wherein men groaned
and sinned
Sickens at heart to hear what sundawn
saith.

XXXIX.

O first-born sons of hope and fairest!
Whose prows first clove the though
unsounded sea
Whence all the dark dead centuri
rose to bar
The spirit of man lest truth shou
make him free,
The sunrise and the sunset, seeing o
star,
Take heart as we to know you that
are.

XL.

Ye rise not, and ye set not: we that s
Ye rise and set like hopes that set a
rise
Look yet but seaward from a land-locke
bay;
But where at last the sea's line is t
sky's,
And truth and hope one sunlight
your eyes,
No sunrise and no sunset marks the
day.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

In a coign of the cliff between lowla
and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between win
ward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inla
island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the se
A girdle of brushwood and thorn e
closes
The steep square slope of the blo
somless bed
Where the weeds that grew green fro
the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt a
broken,
To the low last edge of the long lo
land.
If a step should sound or a word
spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the stran
guest's hand?

So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain;
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither,
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song.
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die — But we?"
And the same wind sang, and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing,
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

RELICS.

This flower that smells of honey and the sea,
White laurustine, seems in my hand to be
A white star made of memory long ago
Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to me.

A star out of the skies, love used to know
Here held in hand, a stray left yet to show
What flowers my heart was full of in the days
That are long since gone down dead memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful ways,
Half hearkening what the buried season says,
Out of the world of the unapparent dead
Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white brethren bred
Nigh where the last of all the land made head
Against the sea, a keen-faced promontory,—
Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea dews fed.

Their hearts were glad of the free place's glory;
The wind that sang them all his stormy story
Had talked all winter to the sleepless spray,
And as the sea's their hues were hard and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the bright day,
They laughed out at the years that could not slay,
Live sons and joyous of unquiet hours,
And stronger than all storms that range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flowers
A keen-edged odor of the sun and showers
Was as the smell of the fresh honey comb
Made sweet for mouths of none but paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves that clomb,
They showed like windfalls of the snow soft foam,
Or feathers from the weary south wind's wing,
Fair as the spray that it came shoreward from.

And thou, as white, what word has thou to bring?
If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou sing?
For some sign surely thou, too, has to bear,
Some word far south was taught thee of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these that were
Taught of the wind's mouth and tne winter air,
Poor tender thing of soft Italian bloom,
Where once thou grewest, what else for me grew there?

Born in what spring and on what city's tomb,
By whose hand wast thou reached, and plucked for whom?
There hangs about thee, could the soul's sense tell,
An odor as of love and of love's doom.

Of days more sweet than thou wast sweet to smell,
Of flower-soft thoughts that came to flower and fell,
Of loves that lived a lily's life and died,
Of dreams now dwelling where dead roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-side
That for the sun's love makes its bosom wide
At sunrise, and with all its woods and flowers
Takes in the morning to its heart of pride!

Thou hast a word of that one land of ours,
And of the fair town called of the fair towers,
A word for me of my San Gimignan,
A word of April's greenest-girdled hours;

Of the breached walls whereon the wallflowers ran
Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of man,
Though time with soft feet break them stone by stone,
Who breaks down hour by hour his own reign's span;

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown
That all that flowerage clothed as flesh clothes bone,
That garment of acacias made for May,
Whereof here lies one witness overblown.

The fair brave trees with all their flowers at play,
How king-like they stood up into the day!
How sweet the day was with them, and the night!
Such words of message have dead flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made bright,
And this that lived upon Italian light,
Before I throw them and these words away,
Who knows but I what memories too take flight?

SESTINA.

I saw my soul at rest upon a day
As a bird sleeping in the nest of night,
Among soft leaves that give the starlight way
To touch its wings but not its eyes with light;
So that it knew as one in visions may,
And knew not as men waking, of delight.

This was the measure of my soul's delight;
It had no power of joy to fly by day,
Nor part in the large lordship of the light;
But in a secret, moon-beholden way
Had all its will of dreams and pleasant night,
And all the love and light that sleepers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking may
It might not have to feed its faint delight
Between the stars by night and sun by day,
Shut up with green leaves and a little light;
Because its way was as a lost star's way,
A world's not wholly known of day or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of night
Made it all music that such minstrels may,
And all they had they gave it of delight;
But in the full face of the fire of day
What place shall be for any starry light,
What part of heaven in all the wide sun's way?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the way,
Watched as a nursling of the large-eyed night,
And sought no strength nor knowledge of the day,
Nor closer touch conclusive of delight,
Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers may,
Nor more of song than they, nor more of light.

For who sleeps once, and sees the secret light
Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way
Between the rise and rest of day and night,
Shall care no more to fare as all men may,
But he his place of pain or of delight,
There shall he dwell, beholding night as day.

Song, have thy day, and take thy fill of light
Before the night be fallen across thy way;
Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.

A WASTED VIGIL.

I.

COULDST thou not watch with me one hour? Behold,
Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of gold,
With sudden feet that graze the gradual sea:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

II.

What, not one hour? For star by star the night
Falls, and her thousands world by world take flight;
They die, and day survives, and what of thee?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

III.

Lo, far in heaven the web of night undone,
And on the sudden sea the gradual sun;
Wave to wave answers, tree responds to tree:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

IV.

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line to line,
Foam by foam quickens on the brightening brine;
Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets free:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

V.

Last year, a brief while since, an age ago,
A whole year past, with bud and bloom and snow,

O moon that wast in heaven, what friends were we!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VI.

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and last year's snows,
Who now saith to thee, moon? or who saith, rose?
O dust and ashes, once found fair to see!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VII.

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet to smell!
With me it is not, is it with thee, well?
O sea-drift blown from windward back to lee!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

VIII.

The old year's dead hands are full of their dead flowers,
The old days are full of dead old loves of ours,
Born as a rose, and briefer born than she:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

IX.

Could two days live again of that dead year,
One would say, seeking us and passing here,
Where is she? and one answering, *Where is he?*
Couldst thou not watch with me?

X.

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere;
If we were they, none knows us what we were,
Nor aught of all their barren grief and glee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XI.

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my verse
Upon thee not for blessing nor for curse,
For some must stand, and some must fall or flee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XII.

As a new moon above spent stars thou wast;
But stars endure after the moon is past,
Couldst thou not watch one hour, though I watch three?
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIII.

What of the night? The night is full, the tide
Storms inland, the most ancient rocks divide;
Yet some endure, and bow nor head nor knee:
Couldst thou not watch with me?

XIV.

Since thou art not as these are, go thy ways;
Thou hast no part in all my nights and days.
Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such things be:
Thou couldst not watch with me.

THE COMPLAINT OF LISA.

(*Double Sestina.*)

DECAMERON, X. 7.

THERE is no woman living that draws breath
So sad as I, though all things sadden her.
There is not one upon life's weariest way
Who is weary as I am weary of all but death.
Toward whom I look as looks the sunflower
All day with all his whole soul toward the sun;
While in the sun's sight I make moan all day,
And all night on my sleepless maiden bed

Weep and call out on death, O Love, and thee,
That thou or he would take me to the dead,
And know not what thing evil I have done
That life should lay such heavy hand on me.

Alas! Love, what is this thou wouldst with me?
What honor shalt thou have to quench my breath,
Or what shall my heart broken profit thee?
O Love, O great god Love, what have I done,
That thou shouldst hunger so after my death?
My heart is harmless as my life's first day:
Seek out some false fair woman, and plague her
Till her tears even as my tears fill her bed:
I am the least flower in thy flowery way,
But till my time be come that I be dead,
Let me live out my flower-time in the sun,
Though my leaves shut before the sun flower.

O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sunflower!
Shall he the sun hath looked on look on me,
That live down here in shade, out of the sun,
Here living in the sorrow and shadow of death?
Shall he that feeds his heart full of the day
Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips breath?
Because she loves him, shall my lord love her
Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly way?
I shall not see him or know him alive or dead;
But thou, I know thee, O Love, and pray to thee
That in brief while my brief life-day be done,
And the worm quickly make my marriage-bed.

For underground there is no sleepless bed:
But here since I beheld my sunflower
These eyes have slept not, seeing a night and day
His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the sun.
Wherefore, if anywhere be any death,
I would fain find and fold him fast to me,
That I may sleep with the world's eldest dead,
With her that died seven centuries since, and her
That went last night down the night wandering way.
For this is sleep indeed, when labor done,
Without love, without dreams, and without breath,
And without thought, O name unnamed of thee.

Ah! but, forgetting all things, shall thee?
Wilt thou not be as now about my bed
There underground as here before the sun?
Shall not thy vision vex me alive and dead,
Thy moving vision without form or breath?
I read long since the bitter tale of he
Who read the tale of Launcelot on day,
And died, and had no quiet after death
But was moved ever along a weary wa
Lost with her love in the underworld ah me,
O my king, O my lordly sunflower,
Would God to me, too, such a thing were done!

But if such sweet and bitter things done,
Then, flying from life, I shall not from thee.
For in that living world without a sun

Thy vision will lay hold upon me dead,
And meet and mock me, and mar my peace in death.
Yet if being wroth, God had such pity on her,
Who was a sinner and foolish in her day,
That even in hell they twain should breathe one breath,
Why should he not in some wise pity me?
So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed,
I may look up and see my sunflower
As he the sun, in some divine strange way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in what way
This sore sweet evil unto us was done.
For on a holy and a heavy day
I was arisen out of my still small bed
To see the knights tilt, and one said to me
'The king;" and seeing him, somewhat stopped my breath;
And if the girl spake more, I heard not her,
For only I saw what I shall see when dead,
A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,
That shone against the sunlight like the sun,
And like a fire, O heart, consuming thee,
The fire of love that lights the pyre of death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death
Who have loved in such a sad and sinless way,
That this my love, lord, was no shame to thee.
So when mine eyes are shut against the sun,
O my soul's sun, O the world's sunflower,
Thou nor no man will quite despise me dead.
And dying I pray with all my low last breath
That thy whole life may be as was that day,
That feast-day that made trothplight death and me,
Giving the world light of thy great deeds done;
And that fair face brightening thy bridal bed,
That God be good as God hath been to her.

That all things goodly and glad remain with her,
All things that make glad life and goodly death;
That as a bee sucks from a sunflower
Honey, when summer draws delighted breath,
Her soul may drink of thy soul in like way,
And love make life a fruitful marriage-bed
Where day may bring forth fruits of joy to day
And night to night till days and nights be dead.
And as she gives light of her love to thee,
Give thou to her the old glory of days long done;
And either give some heat of light to me,
To warm me where I sleep without the sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,
O knight whose lady's heart draws thine to her,
Great king, glad lover, I have a word to thee.
There is a weed lives out of the sun's way,
Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's bed,
That swoons and whitens at the wind's least breath,
A flower star-shaped, that all a summer day
Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower
For very love till twilight finds her dead.
But the great sunflower heeds not her poor death,
Knows not when all her loving life is done;
And so much knows my lord the king of me.

Ay, all day long he has no eye for me;
With golden eye following the golden sun
From rose-colored to purple-pillowed bed,
From birthplace to the flame-lit place of death,
From eastern end to western of his way.
So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,
So the white star-flower turns and yearns to thee,
The sick weak weed, not well alive or dead,
Trod under foot if any pass by her,
Pale, without color of summer or summer breath
In the shrunk shuddering petals, that have done
No work but love, and die before the day.

But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every day,
Be glad and great, O love whose love slays me.
Thy fervent flower made fruitful from the sun
Shall drop its golden seed in the world's way,
That all men thereof nourished shall praise thee
For grain and flower and fruit of works well done;
Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,
Bring forth such growth of the world's garden-bed
As like the sun shall outlive age and death.
And yet I would thine heart had heed of her
Who loves thee alive; but not till she be dead.
Come, Love, then, quickly, and take her utmost breath.

Song, speak for me who am dumb as are the dead;
From my sad bed of tears I send forth thee,
To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's death
Down the sun's way after the flying sun,
For love of her that gave thee wing and breath
Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower

FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO BRUNO,

PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR.

I.

Son of the lightning and the light that glows
Beyond the lightning's or the morning's light,
Soul splendid with all-righteous love of right,
In whose keen fire all hopes and fears and woes
Were clean consumed, and from the ashes rose
Transfigured, and intolerable to sight
Save of purged eyes whose lids have cast off night,
In love's and wisdom's likeness whence they close,
Embracing, and between them truth stands fast,
Embraced of either; thou whose feet were set
On English earth while this was England yet,
Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend that wast,
Heart hardier found and higher than all men's past,
Shall we not praise thee though thine own forget?

II.

Lift up thy light on us and on thine own,
O soul whose spirit on earth was as a rod
To scourge off priests, a sword to pierce their God,
A staff for man's free thought to walk alone,

lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne
On ways untrodden where his fathers trod
Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod,
ıd all men's mouths that made not prayer made moan.
om bonds and torments and the ravening flame,
Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet
Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,
ıd walk with him apart till Shelley came
To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly sweet,
ıd mix with yours a third incorporate name.

AVE ATQUE VALE.

MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

us devions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs;
s morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
ı vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
rte, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

Les Fleurs du Mal.

I.

ALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?
Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet?

II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
Ah! salt and sterile as her kisses were,
The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
Blind gods that cannot spare.

III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us:
Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
Seeing as men sow men reap.

IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping.
That were athirst for sleep and no more life
And no more love, for peace and no more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
Spirit and body and all the springs of song,
Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
Is it not well where soul from body slips,
And flesh from bone divides without a pang
As dew from flower-bell drips?

V.

It is enough: the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend!
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,
No triumph and no labor and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith naught,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair v
head,
The deep division of prodigious breas
The solemn slope of mighty lin
asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that s
keep
The savor and shade of old-world pi
forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep?

VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for
vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, w
bud, what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathe
in the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of de
ion,
What of life is there, what of ill
good?
Are the fruits gray like dust, or bri
like blood?
Does the dim ground grow any seed
ours,
The faint fields quicken any terr
root,
In low lands where the sun and m
are mute,
And all the stars keep silence? .
there flowers
At all, or any fruit?

VIII.

Alas! but though my flying song f
after,
O sweet strange elder singer,
more fleet
Singing, and footprints of thy fle
feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious lau
ter
From the blind tongueless warder
the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of Pro
pine's veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tea
Wept by effaced unprofitable eye
And from pale mouths some cade
of dead sighs, —

These, only these, the hearkening spirit hears,
Sees only such things rise.

IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind and air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead, and do not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

X.

Not thee, oh! never thee, in all time's changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
My spirit from communion of thy song;
These memories and these melodies that throng
Veiled porches of a Muse funereal,—
These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

XI.

Among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
And offering to the dead made, and their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey and spice my seed-lands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of Him, the king,
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken
There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra, mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,

And nourished them indeed with bitter
bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's
food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his
flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart
he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sun-
setting,
God of all suns and songs, he too
bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress
crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from
forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert
and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred
heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the
last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and
alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sun-
less eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

XV.

And one weeps with him in the ways
Lethean,
And stains with tears her changing
bosom chill;
That obscure Venus of the hollow
hill,
That thing transformed which was the
Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh
divine
Long since, and face no more called
Erycine
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh and singing
spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, com-
pel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break
blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sw
night
And love's tired eyes and hands a
barren bosom.
There is no help for these thin
none to mend,
And none to mar; not all our son
O friend!
Will make death clear, or make l
durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and w
vine
And with wild notes about this d
of thine
At least I fill the place where wh
dreams dwell,
And wreathe an unseen shrine.

XVII.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to th
pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast
more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and
forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mourn
garden
Where all day through thine ha
in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secr
and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, a
remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, s
guine-hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep a
thoughts that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee
day
Among the days departed?

XVIII.

For thee, oh, now a silent soul,
brother,
Take at my hands this garland, a
farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wi
smell,

And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobean womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done:
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.

MEMORIAL VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

Death, what hast thou to do with me?
So saith
Love, with eyes set against the face of Death;
What have I done, O thou strong Death, to thee,
That mine own lips should wither from thy breath?

Though thou be blind as fire or as the sea,
Why should thy waves and storms make war on me?
Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,
Or for desire to kiss, if it might be, —

By very mouth of song, and kill me there?
So with keen rains vexing his crownless hair,
With bright feet bruised from no delightful way,
Through darkness and the disenchanted air, —

Lost Love went weeping half a winter's day.
And the armed wind that smote him seemed to say,
How shall the dew live when the dawn is fled,
Or wherefore should the Mayflower outlast May?

Then Death took Love by the right hand, and said,
Smiling, Come now, and look upon thy dead.
But Love cast down the glories of his eyes,
And bowed down like a flower his flowerless head.

And Death spake, saying, What ails thee in such wise,
Being god, to shut thy sight up from the skies?
If thou canst see not, hast thou ears to hear?
Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?

Even as he spake with fleshless lips of fear,
But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's ear,
Behold, the winter was not, and its might
Fell, and fruits broke forth of the barren year.

And upon earth was largess of great light,
And moving music winged for world-wide flight,
And shapes and sounds of gods beheld and heard,
And day's foot set upon the neck of night.

And with such song the hollow ways were stirred
As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,
Or as the whole soul of the sun in spring
Should find full utterance in one flower-soft word, —

And all the season should break forth and sing
From one flower's lips, in one rose triumphing;
Such breath and light of song as of a flame
Made ears and spirits of them that heard it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the same
The shape that led him, nor in face nor name;
For he was bright, and great of thews, and fair,
And in Love's eyes he was not Death, but Fame.

Not that gray ghost whose life is empty and bare,
And his limbs moulded out of mortal air,
A cloud of change that shifts into a shower,
And dies, and leaves no light for time to wear;

But a god clothed with his own joy and power,
A god re-risen out of his mortal hour
Immortal, king and lord of time and space,
With eyes that look on them as from a tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral place
Bloomed, as new life might in a bloodless face,
And where men sorrowing came to seek a tomb
With funeral flowers and tears for grief and grace, —

They saw with light as of a world in bloom
The portal of the House of Fame illume
The ways of life wherein we toiling tread,
And watched the darkness as a brand consume.

And through the gates where rule the deathless dead
The sound of a new singer's soul was shed
That sang among his kinsfolk, and a beam
Shot from the star on a new ruler's head;

A new star lightening the Lethe stream,
A new song mixed into the song preme
Made of all souls of singers and th might,
That makes of life and time and de a dream:

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in sight
Wast as a sun that made for ma delight
Flowers and all fruits in season, ing so near
The sun-god's face, our god that gi us light.

To him, of all gods that we love fear,
Thou among all men by thy name w dear, —
Dear to the god that gives us sp of song
To bind and burn all hearts of n that hear;

The god that makes men's words sweet and strong
For life or time or death to do th wrong,
Who sealed with his thy spirit fo sign,
And filled it with his breath thy wh life long;

Who made thy moist lips fiery with wine
Pressed from the grapes of song sovereign vine,
And with all love of all things lov est
Gave thy soul power to make th more divine, —

That thou might'st breathe upon breathless rest
Of marble, till the brows and lips breast
Felt fall from off them as a cance curse
That speechless sleep wherewith t lived opprest;

Who gave thee strength and heat of spirit to pierce
All clouds of form and color that disperse,
And leave the spirit of beauty to re-mould
In types of clean chryselephantine verse;

Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold
To carve in shapes more glorious than of old,
And build thy songs up in the sight of time
As statues set in godhead manifold, —

In sight and scorn of temporal change and clime
That meet the sun re-risen with refluent rhyme —
As god to god might answer face to face —
From lips whereon the morning strikes sublime.

Dear to the god, our god who gave thee place
Among the chosen of days, the royal race,
The lords of light, whose eyes of old and ears
Saw even on earth and heard him for a space.

There are the souls of those once mortal years
That wrought with fire of joy and light of tears,
In words divine as deeds that grew thereof,
Such music as he swoons with love who hears.

There are the lives that lighten from above
Our under lives, the spheral souls that move
Through the ancient heaven of song-illumined air,
Whence we that hear them singing die with love.

There all the crowned Hellenic heads, and there
The old gods who made men godlike as they were,
The lyric lips wherefrom all songs take fire,
Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.

There, round the sovereign passion of that lyre
Which the stars hear, and tremble with desire,
The ninefold light Pierian is made one
That here we see divided, and aspire, —

Seeing, after this or that crown to be won;
But where they hear the singing of the sun,
All form, all sound, all color, and all thought
Are as one body and soul in unison.

There the song sung shines as a picture wrought,
The painted mouths sing that on earth say naught,
The carven limbs have sense of blood and growth,
And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks not aught.

There all the music of thy living mouth
Lives, and all loves wrought of thine hand in youth,
And bound about the breasts and brows with gold,
And colored pale or dusk from north or south.

Fair living things made to thy will of old,
Born of thy lips, no births of mortal mould,
That in the world of song about thee wait
Where thought and truth are one and manifold.

Within the graven lintels of the gate
That here divides our vision and our fate,
The dreams we walk in and the truths of sleep,
All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There, what one thinks, is his to grasp and keep;
There are no dreams, but very joys to reap;
No foiled desires that die before delight,
No fears to see across our joys, and weep.

There hast thou all thy will of thought and sight,
All hope for harvest, and all heaven for flight;
The sunrise of whose golden-mouthed glad head
To paler songless ghosts was heat and light.

Here, where the sunset of our year is red,
Men think of thee as of the summer dead,
Gone forth before the snows, before thy day,
With unshod feet, with brows unchapleted.

Couldst thou not wait till age had wound, they say,
Round those wreathed brows his soft white blossoms? Nay,
Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with this harsh air, —
Thy bright-winged soul, once free to take its way?

Nor for men's reverence hadst thou need to wear
The holy flower of gray time-hallowed hair;
Nor were it fit that aught of thee grew old,
Fair lover all thy days of all things fair.

And hear we not thy words of molten gold
Singing? or is their light and heat a-cold
Whereat men warmed their spirits? Nay, for all
These yet are with us, ours to hear and hold.

The lovely laughter, the clear tears, th
call
Of love to love on ways where shadow
fall,
Through doors of dim division an
disguise,
And music made of doubts unmusica

The love that caught strange light fro
death's own eyes,[1]
And filled death's lips with fiery word
and sighs,
And half asleep let feed from vein
of his
Her close red warm snake's mout
Egyptian-wise:

And that great night of love mo
strange than this,[2]
When she that made the whole world
bale and bliss
Made king of the whole world's d
sire a slave,
And killed him in mid kingdom with
kiss;

Veiled loves that shifted shapes an
shafts, and gave,[3]
Laughing, strange gifts to hands th
durst not crave,
Flowers doubled-blossomed, fruits
scent and hue
Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger tha
the grave;

All joys and wonders of old lives an
new
That ever in love's shine or shadc
grew,
And all the grief whereof he drean
and grieves,
And all sweet roots fed on his light an
dew;

All these through thee our spirit
sense perceives,
As threads in the unseen woof thy mus
weaves,

[1] La Morte Amoureuse.
[2] Une Nuit de Cléopâtre.
[3] Mademoiselle de Maupin.

Birds caught and snared that fill our ears with thee,
Bay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-bound leaves.

Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy
Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we
For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed,
And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Blue lotus-blooms and white and rosy-red
We wind with poppies for thy silent head,
And on this margin of the sundering sea
Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead.

AGE AND SONG.

(TO BARRY CORNWALL.)

I.

In vain men tell us time can alter
Old loves, or make old memories falter;
That with the old year the old year's life closes.
The old dew still falls on the old sweet flowers,
The old sun revives the new-fledged hours,
The old summer rears the new-born roses.

II.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her
Raiment and wreath and flower of honor,
Gathered long since and long since woven,
Fades not or falls as fall the vernal
Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,
By summer or winter charred or cloven.

III.

No time casts down, no time upraises,
Such loves, such memories, and such praises,
As need no grace of sun or shower,
No saving screen from frost or thunder,
To tend and house around and under
The imperishable and fearless flower.

IV.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations,
Outlive men's lives and lives of nations,
Dead, but for one thing which survives —
The inalienable and unpriced treasure,
The old joy of power, the old pride of pleasure,
That lives in light above men's lives.

IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORNWALL.

(OCT. 4, 1874.)

I.

In the garden of death, where the singers whose names are deathless
One with another make music unheard of men,
Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long breathless,
And the fair eyes shine that shall weep not or change again,
Who comes now crowned with the blossom of snow-white years?
What music is this that the world of the dead men hears?

II.

Beloved of men, whose words on our lips were honey,
Whose name in our ears and our fathers' ears was sweet,
Like summer gone forth of the land his songs made sunny,
To the beautiful veiled bright world where the glad ghosts meet,
Child, father, bridegroom and bride, and anguish and rest,
No soul shall pass of a singer than this more blest.

III.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were
filled and brightened,
As a forest with birds, with the fruit
and the flower of his song;
For the souls' sake blest that heard, and
their cares were lightened,
For the hearts' sake blest that have
fostered his name so long;
By the living and dead lips blest that
have loved his name,
And clothed with their praise and
crowned with their love for fame.

IV.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers
that close not,
That shrink not by day for heat or
for cold by night,
As a thought in the heart shall increase
when the heart's self knows not,
Shall endure in our ears as a sound,
in our eyes as a light;
Shall wax with the years that wane
and the seasons' chime,
As a white rose thornless that grows in
the garden of time.

V.

The same year calls, and one goes hence
with another,
And men sit sad that were glad for
their sweet songs' sake;
The same year beckons, and elder with
younger brother
Takes mutely the cup from his hand
that we all shall take.[1]
They pass ere the leaves be past or the
snows be come;
And the birds are loud, but the lips
that outsang them dumb.

VI.

Time takes them home that we loved,
fair names and famous,
To the soft long sleep, to the broad
sweet bosom of death;
But the flower of their souls he shall
take not away to shame us,
Nor the lips lack song forever th
now lack breath.
For with us shall the music and pe
fume that die not dwell,
Though the dead to our dead bid we
come, and we farewell.

[1] Sydney Dobell died Aug. 22, 1874.

EPICEDE.

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, Ap
30, 1876.)

LIFE may give for love to death
Little: what are life's gifts worth
To the dead wrapt round with earth
Yet from lips of living breath
Sighs or words we are fain to give,
All that yet, while yet we live,
Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,
Passed out of the Italian sun
To the dark where all is done
Fallen upon the verge of May;
Here at life's and April's end
How should song salute my friend
Dead so long before his day?

Not a kindlier life or sweeter,
Time, that lights and quenches men
Now may quench or light again;
Mingling with the mystic metre
Woven of all men's lives with his,
Not a clearer note than this,
Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth
He that living loved the light,
Light and song, may rest aright,
One in death, if strange in birth,
With the deathless dead that make
Life the lovelier for their sake
In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last,—
Struggling hands and suppliant kne
Get no goodlier gift than these.
Song that holds remembrance fast,
Light that lightens death, attend
Round their graves who have
friend
Light, and song, and sleep at last.

INFERIÆ.

SPRING, and the light and sound of things on earth
Re-quickening, all within our green sea's girth;
A time of passage or a time of birth
Fourscore years since as this year, first and last.

The sun is all about the world we see,
The breath and strength of very spring; and we
Live, love, and feed on our own hearts: but he
Whose heart fed mine has passed into the past.

Past, all things born with sense and blood and breath;
The flesh hears naught that now the spirit saith.
If death be like as birth, and birth as death,
The first was fair — more fair should be the last.

Fourscore years since, and come but one month more,
The count were perfect of his mortal score
Whose sail went seaward yesterday from shore
To cross the last of many an unsailed sea.

Light, love, and labor up to life's last height, —
These three were stars unsetting in his sight,
Even as the sun is life and heat and light,
And sets not nor is dark when dark are we.

The life, the spirit, and the work were one
That here — ah! who shall say, that here are done?
Not I, that know not; father, not thy son,
For all the darkness of the night and sea.

MARCH 5, 1877.

A BIRTH-SONG.

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born Sept. 20, 1875.)

OUT of the dark sweet sleep
Where no dreams laugh or weep,
Borne through bright gates of birth
Into the dim sweet light
Where day still dreams of night
While heaven takes form on earth,
White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily of love,
What note of song have we
Fit for the birds and thee,
Fair nestling couched beneath the mother-dove?

Nay, in some more divine
Small speechless song of thine
Some news too good for words,
Heart-hushed and smiling, we
Might hope to have of thee,
The youngest of God's birds,
If thy sweet sense might mix itself with ours,
If ours might understand
The language of thy land,
Ere thine become the tongue of mortal hours:

Ere thy lips learn too soon
Their soft first human tune,
Sweet, but less sweet than now,
And thy raised eyes to read
Glad and good things indeed,
But none so sweet as thou:
Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids to see
What life and love on earth
Bring thee for gifts at birth,
But none so good as thine who hast given us thee:

Now, ere thy sense forget
The heaven that fills it yet,
Now, sleeping or awake,
If thou couldst tell, or we
Ask and be heard of thee,
For love's undying sake,

From thy dumb lips divine and bright
mute speech
Such news might touch our ear
That then would burn to hear
Too high a message now for man's to
reach.

Ere the gold hair of corn
Had withered wast thou born,
To make the good time glad;
The time that but last year
Fell colder than a tear
On hearts and hopes turned sad.
High hopes and hearts requickening in
thy dawn,
Even theirs whose life-springs, child,
Filled thine with life and smiled,
But then wept blood for half their own
withdrawn.[1]

If death and birth be one,
And set with rise of sun,
And truth with dreams divine,
Some word might come with thee
From over the still sea
Deep hid in shade or shine,
Crossed by the crossing sails of death
and birth,
Word of some sweet new thing
Fit for such lips to bring,
Some word of love, some afterthought
of earth.

If love be strong as death,
By what so natural breath
As thine could this be said?
By what so lovely way
Could love send word to say
He lives and is not dead?
Such word alone were fit for only thee,
If his and thine have met
Where spirits rise and set,
His whom we see not, thine whom
scarce we see:

His there new-born, as thou
New-born among us now;
His, here so fruitful-souled,
Now veiled and silent here,
Now dumb as thou last year,
A ghost of one year old:
If lights that change their sphere
changing meet,
Some ray might his not give
To thine who wast to live,
And make thy present with his past l
sweet?

Let dreams that laugh or weep,
All glad and sad dreams, sleep;
Truth more than dreams is clear.
Let thoughts that change and fly,
Sweet thoughts and swift, go by;
More than all thought is here.
More than all hope can forge, or me
ory feign,
The life that in our eyes,
Made out of love's life, lies,
And flower-like fed with love for s
and rain.

Twice royal in his root
The sweet small olive-shoot
Here set in sacred earth;
Twice dowered with glorious grace
From either heaven-born race
First blended in its birth;
Fair god or genius of so fair an hou
For love of either name
Twice crowned, with love and fam
Guard and be gracious to the fair-nam
flower.

OCT. 19, 1875.

[1] Oliver Madox Brown died Nov. 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

EX-VOTO.

WHEN their last hour shall rise
Pale on these mortal eyes,
Herself like one that dies,
And kiss me dying
The cold last kiss, and fold
Close round my limbs her cold
Soft shade as raiment rolled,
And leave them lying, —

If aught my soul would say
Might move to hear me pray
The birth-god of my day
That he might hearken,

This grace my heart should crave, —
To find no landward grave
That worldly springs make brave,
World's winters darken, —

Nor grow through gradual hours
The cold blind seed of flowers
Made by new beams and showers
From limbs that moulder,
Nor take my part with earth;
But find for death's new birth
A bed of larger girth,
More chaste and colder.

Not earth's for spring and fall,
Not earth's at heart, not all
Earth's making, though men call
Earth only mother,
Not hers at heart she bare
Me, but thy child, O fair
Sea, and thy brother's care,
The wind thy brother.

Yours was I born, and ye,
The sea-wind and the sea,
Made all my soul in me
A song forever,
A harp to string and smite
For love's sake of the bright
Wind and the sea's delight,
To fail them never:

Not while on this side death
I hear what either saith,
And drink of either's breath
With heart's thanksgiving
That in my veins like wine
Some sharp salt blood of thine,
Some springtide pulse of brine,
Yet leaps up living.

When thy salt lips well-nigh
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,
Grudged I so much to die
This death as others?
Was it no ease to think
The chalice from whose brink
Fate gave me death to drink
Was thine, — my mother's?

Thee too, the all-fostering earth,
Fair as thy fairest birth,
More than thy worthiest worth,
We call, we know thee,
More sweet and just and dread
Than live men highest of head
Or even thy holiest dead
Laid low below thee.

The sunbeam on the sheaf,
The dew-fall on the leaf,
All joy, all grace, all grief,
Are thine for giving:
Of thee our loves are born,
Our lives and loves, that mourn
And triumph; tares with corn,
Dead seed with living;

All good and ill things done
In eye-shot of the sun
At last in thee made one
Rest well contented;
All words of all man's breath,
And works he doth or saith,
All wholly done to death,
None long lamented.

A slave to sons of thee,
Thou, seeming, yet art free;
But who shall make the sea
Serve even in seeming?
What plough shall bid it bear
Seed to the sun and the air,
Fruit for thy strong sons' fare,
Fresh wine's foam streaming?

What old-world son of thine,
Made drunk with death as wine,
Hath drunk the bright sea's brine
With lips of laughter?
Thy blood they drink; but he
Who hath drunken of the sea
Once deeplier than of thee
Shall drink not after.

Of thee thy sons of men
Drink deep, and thirst again, —
For wine in feasts, and then
In fields for slaughter;
But thirst shall touch not him
Who hath felt with sense grown dim
Rise, covering lip and limb,
The wan sea's water.

All fire of thirst that aches
The salt sea cools and slakes
More than all springs or lakes,
  Freshets or shallows;
Wells where no beam can burn
Through frondage of the fern
That hides from hart and hern
  The haunt it hallows.

Peace with all graves on earth
For death or sleep or birth
Be alway, one in worth
  One with another;
But when my time shall be,
O mother, O my sea,
Alive or dead, take me,
  Me too, my mother!

PASTICHE.

Now the days are all gone over
Of our singing, love by lover,
Days of summer-colored seas
Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over
Of our dreaming, dreams that hover
In a mist of fair false things,
Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,
Now the fears with hope for brother,
Scarce are with us as strange words,
Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is
As the smell of last year's roses,
As the radiance in our eyes
Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen
Seems no god come forth of prison,
But a bird of plume-plucked wing,
Pale with thoughts of evening.

Now hath hope, out-raced in running,
Given the torch up of his cunning,
And the palm he thought to wear,
Even to his own strong child, — despair.

BEFORE SUNSET.

In the lower lands of day
  On the hither side of night,
There is nothing that will stay,
  There are all things soft to sight;
  Lighted shade and shadowy light
In the wayside and the way,
  Hours the sun has spared to smite,
Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say
  No good thing of thee and me?
Time that made us and will slay
  Laughs at love in me and thee;
  But if here the flowers may see
One whole hour of amorous breath,
  Time shall die, and love shall be
Lord as time was over death.

SONG.

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rosy bed;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
Kept watch by his head forlorn,
Till the night was overworn,
And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,
And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
And the watchers ghostly and gray
Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright
And his lips waxed ruddy as light:
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER.

I.

O tender time that love thinks lo
  to see,
Sweet foot of spring that with h
  footfall sows

Late snow-like flowery leavings of the snows,
Be not too long irresolute to be!
O mother-month, where have they hidden thee?
Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose,
I reach my heart out toward the spring-time lands.
I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
The purplest of the prime;
I lean my soul down over them, with hands
Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers;
I send my love back to the lovely time.

II.

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head?
Veiled with what visions while the gray world grieves,
Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves,
With warm intangible green shadows spread
To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed?
What sleep enchants thee? what delight deceives?
Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn
Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet
Its silver web unweave,
Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn
Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret
Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

III.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
Large nightfall, nor imperial plenilune,
Nor strong sweet shape of the full-breasted noon;
But where the silver-sandalled shadows are,
Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,
Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon:
Hard overhead the half-lit crescent swims,
The tender-colored night draws hardly breath,
The light is listening;
They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,
Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.

IV.

As sweet desire of day before the day,
As dreams of love before the true love born,
From the outer edge of winter overworn
The ghost arisen of May before the May
Takes through dim air her unawakened way,
The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn.
With little unblown breasts and child-eyed looks
Following, the very maid, the girl-child spring,
Lifts windward her bright brows,
Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks,
And kindles with her own mouth's coloring
The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

V.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath
Shall put at last the deadly days to death,
And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee,
And seaward hollows where my feet would be
When heaven shall hear the word that April saith

To change the cold heart of the weary time,
To stir and soften all the time to tears,
Tears joyfuller than mirth;
As even to May's clear height the young days climb
With feet not swifter than those fair first years
Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers on earth.

VI.

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back
One good thing youth has given and borne away:
I crave not any comfort of the day
That is not, nor on time's re-trodden track
Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black
That long since left me on their mortal way;
Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath
That comes with morning from the sun to be,
And sets light hope on fire;
No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death,
No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green tree,
No leaf once plucked, or once fulfilled desire.

VII.

The morning song beneath the stars that fled
With twilight through the moonless mountain air,
While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair
Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head,
Rising; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead,
The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were, —
These may'st thou not give back forever; these.
As at the sea's heart all her wreck lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea;
But flowers thou may'st, and winds, an hours of ease,
And all its April to the world tho may'st
Give back, and half my April bac to me.

AT PARTING.

For a day and night Love sang to u played with us,
Folded us round from the dark an the light;
And our hearts were fulfilled of th music he made with us,
Made with our hearts and our lips whi he stayed with us,
Stayed in mid passage his pinio from flight
For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with h wings had he hidden us,
Covered us close from the eyes th would smite,
From the feet that had tracked and t tongues that had chidden us
Sheltering in shade of the myrtles fo bidden us
Spirit and flesh growing one wi delight
For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest, and his fe will not stay for us:
Morning is here in the joy of might;
With his breath has he sweetened night and a day for us:
Now let him pass, and the myrtles ma way for us;
Love can but last in us here at h height
For a day and a night.

THE WHITE CZAR.

[In an English magazine of 1877, there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism; but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfitly than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

I.

GEHAZI by the hue that chills thy cheek
And Pilate by the hue that sears thine hand
Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand
That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak
All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek —
Thou set thy foot where England's used to stand!
Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian land!
Slave of the slaves that call thee lord, and weak
As their foul tongues who praise thee! son of them
Whose presence put the snows and stars to shame
In centuries dead and damned that reek below
Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime and flame,
To them that bare thee like them shalt thou go
Forth of man's life, — a leper white as snow.

II.

Call for clear water, wash thine hands, be clean,
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate! thou shalt know
Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth for woe
Ere the outer darkness take thee round unseen
That hides the red ghosts of thy race obscene
Bound nine times round with hell's most dolorous flow,
And in its pools thy crownless head lie low
By his of Spain who dared an English queen
With half a world to hearten him for fight,
Till the wind gave his warriors and their might
To shipwreck and the corpse-encumbered sea.
But thou, take heed, ere yet thy lips wax white,
Lest as it was with Philip so it be,
O white of name and red of hand, with thee!

RIZPAH.

How many sons, how many generations,
For how long years hast thou bewept, and known
Nor end of torment nor surcease of moan,
Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of nations,
Crowned with the crowning sign of desolations,
And couldst not even scare off with hand or groan
Those carrion birds devouring bone by bone
The children of thy thousand tribulations?
Thou wast our warrior once; thy sons long dead
Against a foe less foul than this made head,
Poland, in years that sound and shine afar;
Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-blade's stead
The rotten corpse-light of the Russian star
That lights towards hell his bond-slaves and their Czar.

TO LOUIS KOSSUTH.

LIGHT of our fathers' eyes, and in our own
Star of the unsetting sunset! for thy name,
That on the front of noon was as a flame
In the great year nigh thirty years agone
When all the heavens of Europe shook and shone
With stormy wind and lightning, keeps its fame
And bears its witness all day through the same.
Not for past days and great deeds past alone,
Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor praised;
But that now too we know thy voice upraised, —
Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth of God,
Thine hand, the thunder-bearer's, raised to smite
As with heaven's lightning for a sword and rod
Men's heads abased before the Muscovite.

THE PILGRIMS.

WHO is your lady of love, O ye that pass
Singing? and is it for sorrow of that which was
That ye sing sadly, or dream of what shall be?
For gladly at once and sadly it seems ye sing.
— Our lady of love by you is unbeholden;
For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor lips, nor golden
Treasure of hair, nor face nor form.
But we
That love, we know her more fair than any thing.

— Is she a queen, having great gifts to give?
— Yea, these: that whoso hath seen her shall not live
Except he serve her sorrowing, wit
strange pain,
Travail and bloodshedding ar
bitterer tears;
And when she bids die he shall surel
die.
And he shall leave all things under th
sky,
And go forth naked under sun ar
rain,
And work and wait and watch o
all his years.

— Hath she on earth no place of hal
tation?
— Age to age calling, nation answerin
nation,
Cries out, Where is she? and the
is none to say;
For if she be not in the spirit of me
For if in the inward soul she hath
place,
In vain they cry unto her, seeking h
face,
In vain their mouths make much
her; for they
Cry with vain tongues, till th
heart lives again.

— O ye that follow, and have ye
repentance?
For on your brows is written a mort
sentence,
An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sig
That in your lives ye shall n
pause or rest,
Nor have the sure sweet common lov
nor keep
Friends and safe days, nor joy of li
nor sleep.
— These have we not, who have o
thing, the divine
Face and clear eyes of faith a
fruitful breast.

— And ye shall die before your thron
be won.
— Yea, and the changed world and t
liberal sun
Shall move and shine without
and we lie
Dead; but if she too move
earth, and live,

But if the old world with all the old irons rent
Laugh and give thanks, shall we be not content?
Nay, we shall rather live, we shall not die,
Life being so little, and death so good to give.

— And these men shall forget you. — Yea, but we
Shall be a part of the earth and the ancient sea,
And heaven-high air august, and awful fire,
And all things good; and no man's heart shall beat
But somewhat in it of our blood once shed
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us the dead
Blood of men slain and the old same life's desire
Plants in their fiery footprints our fresh feet.

— But ye that might be clothed with all things pleasant,
Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft present,
That clothe yourselves with the cold future air;
When mother and father and tender sister and brother
And the old live love that was shall be as ye,
Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall be.
— She shall be yet who is more than all these were,
Than sister or wife or father unto us or mother.

— Is this worth life, is this, to win for wages?
Lo, the dead mouths of the awful gray-grown ages,
The venerable, in the past that is their prison,
In the outer darkness, in the unopening grave,
Laugh, knowing how many as ye now say have said,
How many, and all are fallen, are fallen and dead:
Shall ye dead rise, and these dead have not risen?
— Not we but she, who is tender, and swift to save.

— Are ye not weary and faint not by the way,
Seeing night by night devoured of day by day,
Seeing hour by hour consumed in sleepless fire?
Sleepless; and ye too, when shall ye too sleep?
— We are weary in heart and head, in hands and feet,
And surely more than all things sleep were sweet, —
Than all things save the inexorable desire
Which whoso knoweth shall neither faint nor weep.

— Is this so sweet that one were fain to follow?
Is this so sure where all men's hopes are hollow,
Even this your dream, that by much tribulation
Ye shall make whole flawed hearts, and bowed necks straight?
— Nay, though our life were blind, our death were fruitless,
Not therefore were the whole world's high hope rootless;
But man to man, nation would turn to nation,
And the old life live, and the old great word be great.

— Pass on, then, and pass by us, and let us be,
For what light think ye after life to see?
And if the world fare better will ye know?
And if man triumph who shall seek you and say?
— Enough of light is this for one life's span,
That all men born are mortal, but not man;

And we men bring death lives by
night to sow,
That man may reap and eat and
live by day.

THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

μᾶ Γᾶ, μᾶ Γᾶ, βοὰν
φοβερὸν ἀπότρεπε.
ÆSCH. *Supp.* 890.

CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy
sons may reach thee,
We thy latter sons, the men thine
after-birth,
We the children of thy gray-grown
age, O Earth,
O our mother everlasting, we beseech
thee,
By the sealed and secret ages of thy
life;
By the darkness wherein grew thy
sacred forces;
By the songs of stars thy sisters in
their courses;
By thine own song hoarse and hollow
and shrill with strife;
By thy voice distuned and marred of
modulation;
By the discord of thy measure's
march with theirs;
By the beauties of thy bosom, and
the cares;
By thy glory of growth, and splendor
of thy station;
By the shame of men thy children, and
the pride;
By the pale-checked hope that sleeps
and weeps and passes,
As the gray dew from the morning
mountain grasses;
By the white-lipped sightless memories
that abide;
By the silence and the sound of many
sorrows;
By the joys that leapt up living and
fell dead;
By the veil that hides thy hands and
breasts and head,
Wrought of divers-colored days and
nights and morrows;

Isis, thou that knowest of God wha
worlds are worth,
Thou the ghost of God, the mothe
uncreated,
Soul for whom the floating forceles
ages waited
As our forceless fancies wait on the
O Earth;
Thou the body and soul, the father-go
and mother,
If at all it move thee, knowing of a
things done
Here where evil things and goo
things are not one,
But their faces are as fire against eac
other;
By thy morning and thine evening, nigh
and day;
By the first white light that stirs an
strives and hovers
As a bird above the brood her boso
covers,
By the sweet last star that takes th
westward way;
By the night whose feet are shod wit
snow or thunder,
Fledged with plumes of storm, c
soundless as the dew;
By the vesture bound of many-folde
blue
Round her breathless breasts, and a
the woven wonder;
By the golden-growing eastern strea
of sea;
By the sounds of sunrise moving
the mountains;
By the forces of the floods and u
sealed fountains;
Thou that badest man be born, b
man be free.

GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with m
beauty
From north to south:
Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fi
of duty
From thine own mouth.
Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first th
laws, and knew them
Truths undefiled;

ine, the fairest hands, took freedom
first into them,
A weanling child.
r my light, now he lies sleeping, seen
above him
Where none sees other;
r my dead that loved, and living men
that love him, —
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

ITALY.

am she that was the light of thee
enkindled
When Greece grew dim;
ie whose life grew up with man's free
life, and dwindled
With wane of him;
ie that once by sword and once by
word imperial
Struck bright thy gloom;
id a third time, casting off these years
funereal,
Shall burst thy tomb.
r that bond 'twixt thee and me where-
at affrighted
Thy tyrants fear us;
r that hope and this remembrance re-
united, —
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

SPAIN.

am she that set thy seal upon the
nameless
West worlds of seas;
id my sons as brides took unto them
the tameless
Hesperides;
ll my sins and sons through sinless
lands dispersèd,
With red flame shod,
ade accurst the name of man, and
thrice accursèd
The name of God.
st for those past fires the fires of my
repentance
Hell's fume yet smother,
ow my blood would buy remission of
my sentence, —
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-
bearer,
Thy voice and cry;
She that washed thee with her blood,
and left thee fairer,
The same was I.
Were not these the hands that raised
thee fallen, and fed thee,
These hands defiled?
Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine
eye that led thee, —
Not I thy child?
By the darkness on our dreams, and the
dead errors
Of dead times near us;
By the hopes that hang around thee,
and the terrors, —
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong, and
her eyes blinded,
And lips athirst,
Till upon the night of nations many-
minded
One bright day burst;
Till the myriad stars be molten into
one light,
And that light thine;
Till the soul of man be parcel of the
sunlight,
And thine of mine.
By the snows that blanch not him, nor
cleanse from slaughter,
Who slays his brother;
By the stains and by the chains on me
thy daughter, —
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shows on mighty limbs
and maiden
Nor chain nor stain;
For what blood can touch these hands
with gold unladen,
These feet what chain?
By the surf of spears one shieldless
bosom breasted,
And was my shield,

Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-heads twin-crested
Twice drenched the field.
By the snows and souls untrampled and untroubled
That shine to cheer us,
Light of those to these responsive and redoubled, —
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden fountains
Slept freedom armed;
By the magic born to music in my mountains,
Heart-chained and charmed.
By those days, the very dream whereof delivers
My soul from wrong;
By the sounds that make of all my ringing rivers
None knows what song;
By the many tribes and names of my division
One from another;
By the single eye of sun-compelling vision, —
(*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother!

ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy chosen,
Free, and not free;
She that fed thy springs, till now her springs are frozen;
Yet I am she.
By the sea that clothed and sun that saw me splendid
And fame that crowned,
By the song-fires and the sword-fires mixed and blended
That robed me round;
By the star that Milton's soul for Shelley's lighted,
Whose rays insphere us;
By the beacon-bright Republic far-off sighted, —
(*Cho.*) O mother, hear us!

CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blo
blasts of error,
That drown each other;
Turn away the fearful cry, the lo
tongued terror,
O Earth, O mother!
Turn away their eyes who track, th
hearts who follow,
The pathless past;
Show the soul of man, as summer sh
the swallow,
The way at last.
By the sloth of men that all too l
endure men
On man to tread;
By the cry of men, the bitter cry
poor men
That faint for bread;
By the blood-sweat of the people in
garden
Inwalled of kings;
By his passion interceding for their
don
Who do these things;
By the sightless souls and fleshl
limbs that labor
For not their fruit;
By the foodless mouth with foodl
heart for neighbor,
That, mad, is mute;
By the child that famine eats as wo
the blossom —
Ah God, the child! —
By the milkless lips that strain
bloodless bosom
Till woe runs wild;
By the pastures that give grass to f
the lamb in,
Where men lack meat;
By the cities clad with gold and sh
and famine;
By field and street;
By the people, by the poor man, by
master
That men call slave;
By the cross-winds of defeat and
disaster,
By wreck, by wave;
By the helm that keeps us still to
wards driving,
Still eastward bound,

Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on
eyes reviving,
And land be found:
We thy children, that arraign not nor
impeach thee
Though no star steer us,
By the waves that wash the morning
we beseech thee,
O mother, hear us!

CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES.

I.

IN CHURCH.

THOU whose birth on earth
Angels sang to men,
While thy stars made mirth,
Saviour, at thy birth,
This day born again;

As this night was bright
With thy cradle-ray,
Very light of light,
Turn the wild world's night
To thy perfect day.

God whose feet made sweet
Those wild ways they trod,
From thy fragrant feet
Staining field and street
With the blood of God;

God whose breast is rest
In the time of strife,
In thy secret breast
Sheltering souls opprest
From the heat of life;

God whose eyes are skies
Love-lit as with spheres
By the lights that rise
To thy watching eyes,
Orbèd lights of tears;

God whose heart hath part
In all grief that is,
Was not man's the dart
That went through thine heart,
And the wound not his?

Where the pale souls wail,
Held in bonds of death,
Where all spirits quail,
Came thy Godhead pale
Still from human breath, —

Pale from life and strife,
Wan with manhood, came
Forth of mortal life,
Pierced as with a knife,
Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord
In all time and space
Heard, beheld, adored,
With all ages poured
Forth before thy face, —

Lord, what worth in earth
Drew thee down to die?
What therein was worth,
Lord, thy death and birth?
What beneath thy sky?

Light above all love
By thy love was lit,
And brought down the Dove
Feathered from above
With the wings of it.

From the height of night,
Was not thine the star
That led forth with might
By no worldly light
Wise men from afar?

Yet the wise men's eyes
Saw thee not more clear
Than they saw thee rise
Who in shepherds' guise
Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure,
And are with us yet;
Be thy name a sure
Refuge for thy poor
Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,
Clear alike and dark,
Keep our works and ways
This and all thy days
Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,
Lord, and lose not one?
Who save one shall keep,
Lest the shepherds sleep?
Who beside the Son?

From the grave-deep wave,
From the sword and flame,
Thou, even thou, shalt save
Souls of king and slave
Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn
Or her fires above,
Jesus virgin-born,
Held of men in scorn,
Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace
As the sun's doth heat,
Let thy sun-bright face
Lighten time and space
Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,
Thou that madest morn;
Bid oppressions cease;
Bid the night be peace;
Bid the day be born.

II.

OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways
All the night makes dark, —
What day shall we praise
Of these weary days
That our life-drops mark?

We whose mind is blind,
Fed with hope of naught;
Wastes of worn mankind,
Without heart or mind,
Without meat or thought;

We with strife of life
Worn till all life cease,
Want, a whetted knife,
Sharpening strife on strife,
How should we love peace?

Ye whose meat is sweet
And your wine-cup red,
Us beneath your feet
Hunger grinds as wheat, —
Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright
With soft rest and heat,
Clothed like day with light,
Us the naked night
Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,
That ye tread so light?
Man on us as God,
God as man hath trod, —
Trod us down with might.

We that one by one
Bleed from either's rod,
What for us hath done
Man beneath the sun,
What for us hath God?

We whose blood is food
Given your wealth to feed,
From the Christless rood
Red with no God's blood,
But with man's indeed;

How shall we that see
Night-long overhead
Life, the flowerless tree,
Nailed whereon as we
Were our fathers dead, —

We whose ear can hear,
Not whose tongue can name,
Famine, ignorance, fear,
Bleeding tear by tear
Year by year of shame, —

Till the dry life die
Out of bloodless breast,
Out of beamless eye,
Out of mouths that cry
Till death feed with rest, —

How shall we as ye,
Though ye bid us, pray?
Though ye call, can we
Hear you call, or see,
Though ye show us day?

We whose name is shame,
We whose souls walk bare,
Shall we call the same
God as ye by name,
Teach our lips your prayer? —

God, forgive and give,
For His sake who died? —
Nay, for ours who live,
How shall we forgive
Thee, then, on our side?

We whose right to light
Heaven's high noon denies,
Whom the blind beams smite
That for you shine bright,
And but burn our eyes, —

With what dreams of beams
Shall we build up day,
At what sourceless streams
Seek to drink in dreams
Ere they pass away?

In what street shall meet,
At what market-place,
Your feet and our feet,
With one goal to greet,
Having run one race?

What one hope shall ope
For us all as one
One same horoscope,
Where the soul sees hope
That outburns the sun?

At what shrine what wine,
At what board what bread,
Salt as blood or brine,
Shall we share in sign
How we poor were fed?

In what hour what power
Shall we pray for morn,
If your perfect hour,
When all day bears flower,
Not for us is born?

III.

BEYOND CHURCH.

Ye that weep in sleep,
Souls and bodies bound,
Ye that all night keep
Watch for change, and weep
That no change is found;

Ye that cry and die,
And the world goes on
Without ear or eye,
And the days go by
Till all days are gone:

Man shall do for you,
Men the sons of man,
What no god would do
That they sought unto
While the blind years ran.

Brotherhood of good,
Equal laws and rights,
Freedom, whose sweet food
Feeds the multitude
All their days and nights

With the bread full-fed
Of her body blest
And the soul's wine shed
From her table spread
Where the world is guest, —

Mingling me and thee,
When like light of eyes
Flashed through thee and me
Truth shall make us free,
Liberty make wise:

These are they whom day
Follows and gives light
Whence they see to slay
Night, and burn away
All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,
What of want and wealth,
When one faith is wine
For my heart and thine,
And one draught is health?

For no sect elect
Is the soul's wine poured,
And her table decked:
Whom should man reject
From man's common board?

Gods refuse and choose,
Grudge and sell and spare:
None shall man refuse,
None of all men lose,
None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight
Knows that hour before;
No man's hand hath might
To put back that light
For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,
Kneeling with void hands,
Shall they see light fall
Till it come for all
Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire
Down from heaven by prayer,
Though man's vain desire
Hang faith's wind-struck lyre
Out in tuneless air.

One hath breath, and saith
What the tune shall be, —
Time, who puts his breath
Into life and death,
Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow,
Fill their tides and ebb,
As his fingers go
Weaving to and fro
One unfinished web.

All the range of change
Hath its bounds therein,
All the lives that range
All the byways strange
Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star
Speaks, and white moons wake,
Watchful from afar
What the night's ways are
For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames
Pass and flash and fall,
Night-begotten names,
And the night reclaims,
As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,
And the sun's name Right;
And when light is none
Saving of the sun,
All men shall have light

All shall see and be
Parcel of the morn:
Ay, though blind were we,
None shall choose but see
When that day is born.

MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère, c'est la R
publique. — *Les Misérables.*

WHO is it that sits by the way, by th
wild wayside,
In a rent stained raiment, the robe of
cast-off bride,
In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, wit
soiled feet bare,
With the night for a garment upon he
with torn wet hair?
She is fairer of face than the daughte
of men, and her eyes,
Worn through with her tears, are dee
as the depth of skies.

This is she for whose sake being falle
for whose abject sake,
Earth groans in the blackness of dar
ness, and men's hearts break.
This is she for whose love, having see
her, the men that were
Poured life out as water, and shed the
souls upon air.
This is she for whose glory their yea
were counted as foam;
Whose face was a light upon Greec
was a fire upon Rome.

Is it now not surely a vain thing, a foo
ish and vain,
To sit down by her, mourn to her, ser
her, partake in the pain?

She is gray with the dust of time on his manifold ways,
Where her faint feet stumble and falter through yearlong days.
Shall she help us at all, O fools, give fruit or give fame,
Who herself is a name despised, a rejected name?

We have not served her for guerdon. If any do so,
That his mouth may be sweet with such honey, we care not to know.
We have drunk from a wine-unsweetened, a perilous cup,
A draught very bitter. The kings of the earth stood up,
And the rulers took counsel together, to smite her and slay;
And the blood of her wounds is given us to drink to-day.

Can these bones live? or the leaves that are dead leaves bud?
Or the dead blood drawn from her veins be in your veins blood?
Will ye gather up water again that was drawn and shed?
In the blood is the life of the veins, and her veins are dead.
For the lives that are over are over, and past things past;
She had her day, and it is not; was first, and is last.

Is it nothing unto you, then, all ye that pass by,
If her breath be left in her lips, if she live now or die?
Behold now, O people, and say if she be not fair,
Whom your fathers followed to find her, with praise and prayer,
And rejoiced, having found her, though roof they had none, nor bread.
But ye care not: what is it to you if her day be dead?

It was well with our fathers; their sound was in all men's lands;
There was fire in their hearts, and the hunger of fight in their hands.
Naked and strong they went forth in her strength like flame,
For her love's and her name's sake of old, her republican name.
But their children, by kings made quiet, by priests made wise,
Love better the heat of their hearths than the light of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children indeed, who have sold,
O golden goddess, the light of thy face for gold?
Are they sons indeed of the sons of thy dayspring of hope,
Whose lives are in fief of an emperor, whose souls of a Pope?
Hide then thine head, O belovèd! thy time is done;
Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she indeed shall rise,
When the hopes are dead in her heart as the tears in her eyes?
If ye sing of her dead, will she stir? if ye weep for her, weep?
Come away now, leave her: what hath she to do but sleep?
But ye that mourn are alive, and have years to be;
And life is good, and the world is wiser than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with years to give,
And years to promise; but how long now shall it live?
And foolish and poor is faith, and her ways are bare,
Till she find the way of the sun, and the morning air.
In that hour shall this dead face shine as the face of the sun,
And the soul of man and her soul and the world's be one.

MATER TRIUMPHALIS.

Mother of man's time-travelling generations,
Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart,
God above all gods, worshipped of all nations,
Light above light, law beyond law, thou art.

Thy face is as a sword, smiting in sunder
Shadows and chains, and dreams and iron things;
The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder
Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

Angels and gods, spirit and sense, thou takest
In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew;
The temples and the towers of time thou breakest,
His thoughts and words and works, to make them new.

All we have wandered from thy ways, have hidden
Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls they heard;
Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and chidden,
Scourged of thy speech, and wounded of thy word.

We have known thee, and have not known thee; stood beside thee,
Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy feet trod,
Loved and renounced, and worshipped and denied thee,
As though thou wert but as another god.

"One hour for sleep," we said, "and yet one other;
All day we served her, and who shall serve by night?"

Not knowing of thee, thy face not know
ing, O mother,
O light wherethrough the darkness i
as light.

Men that forsook thee hast thou no
forsaken,
Races of men that knew not hast tho
known;
Nations that slept thou hast doubte
not to waken,
Worshippers of strange gods to mak
thine own.

All old gray histories hiding thy clea
features,
O secret spirit and sovereign, a
men's tales,
Creeds woven of men, thy children an
thy creatures,
They have woven for vestures of the
and for veils.

Thine hands, without election or exem
tion,
Feed all men fainting from false peac
or strife,
O thou, the resurrection and redem
tion,
The godhead and the manhood an
the life.

Thy wings shadow the waters; thin
eyes lighten
The horror of the hollows of th
night;
The depths of the earth and the dar
places brighten
Under thy feet, whiter than fire
white.

Death is subdued to thee, and hell
bands broken;
Where thou art only is heaven: wh
hears not thee,
Time shall not hear him; when men
names are spoken,
A nameless sign of death shall h
name be.

Deathless shall be the death, the name be nameless;
Sterile of stars his twilight time of breath;
With fire of hell shall shame consume him shameless,
And dying, all the night darken his death.

The years are as thy garments, the world's ages
As sandals bound and loosed from thy swift feet;
Time serves before thee, as one that hath for wages
Praise or shame only, bitter words or sweet.

Thou sayest "Well done," and all a century kindles;
Again, thou sayest, "Depart from sight of me,"
And all the light of face of all men dwindles,
And the age is as the broken glass of thee.

The night is as a seal set on men's faces,
On faces fallen of men that take no light,
Nor give light in the deeps of the dark places,
Blind things, incorporate with the body of night.

Their souls are serpents winter-bound and frozen,
Their shame is as a tame beast, at their feet
Couched; their cold lips deride thee and thy chosen,
Their lying lips made gray with dust for meat.

Then when their time is full and days run over,
The splendor of thy sudden brow made bare
Darkens the morning; thy bared hands uncover
The veils of light and night and the awful air.

And the world naked as a new-born maiden
Stands virginal and splendid as at birth,
With all thine heaven of all its light unladen,
Of all its love unburdened all thine earth.

For the utter earth and the utter air of heaven,
And the extreme depth is thine, and the extreme height;
Shadows of things and veils of ages riven
Are as men's kings unkingdomed in thy sight.

Through the iron years, the centuries brazen-gated,
By the ages' barred, impenetrable doors,
From the evening to the morning have we waited,
Should thy foot haply sound on the awful floors.

The floors untrodden of the sun's feet glimmer,
The star-unstricken pavements of the night;
Do the lights burn inside? the lights wax dimmer
On festal faces withering out of sight.

The crowned heads lose the light on them; it may be
Dawn is at hand to smite the loud feast dumb;
To bind the torch-lit centuries till the day be,
The feasting kingdoms till thy kingdome come.

Shall it not come? deny they or dissemble,
Is it not even as lightning from on high
Now? and though many a soul close eyes, and tremble,
How should they tremble at all who love thee as I?

I am thine harp between thine hands, O mother!
All my strong chords are strained with love of thee.
We grapple in love and wrestle, as each with other
Wrestle the wind and the unreluctant sea.

I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,
Who loves a little for a little pay.
Me not thy winds and storms, nor thrones disrooted,
Nor molten crowns, nor thine own sins, dismay.

Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore art thou sinless;
Stained hast thou been, who art therefore without stain;
Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but kinless
Thou, in whose womb Time sows the all-various grain.

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful mother!
I pray thee that thou spare not, of thy grace.
How were it with me then, if ever another
Should come to stand before thee in this my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;
The graves of souls born worms, and creeds grown carrion
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,
And I, beneath thy foot, the pedal prest;
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass an
perish,
As haze in sunrise on the red se
line;
But thou from dawn to sunsetting sha
cherish
The thoughts that led and souls th
lighted mine.

Reared between night and noon an
truth and error,
Each twilight-travelling bird th
trills and screams
Sickens at midday, nor can face f
terror
The imperious heaven's inevitab
extremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equ
fingers
At sign to sharpen or to slacke
strings;
I keep no time of song with gol
perched singers
And chirp of linnets on the wrists
kings.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days th
darken,
Thy petrel in the foam that bears t
bark
To port through night and tempest:
thou hearken,
My voice is in thy heaven before t
lark.

My song is in the mist that hides t
morning,
My cry is up before the day f
thee;
I have heard thee and beheld thee a
give warning,
Before thy wheels divide the sky a
sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced a
feathered fairer,
To see in summer what I see
spring:
I have eyes and heart to endure the
O thunder-bearer,
And they shall be who shall ha
tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear,
and part not
From thine unnavigable and wingless
way;
Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou
art not,
Nor all thy night long have denied
thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy
pæan,
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to
vale,
With wind-notes as of eagles Æschy-
lean,
And Sappho singing in the nightin-
gale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and
daughters,
Of this night's songs thine ear shall
keep but one, —
That supreme song which shook the
channelled waters,
And called thee skyward as God calls
the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire
above thee;
Though death before thee come to
clear thy sky;
Let us but see in his thy face who love
thee;
Yea, though thou slay us, arise, and
let us die.

SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold
The fields are full of naked gold,
Broadcast from heaven on lands it
loves;
The green veiled air is full of doves;
Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let
Light on the small warm grasses wet
Fall in short broken kisses sweet,
And break again like waves that beat
Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth
Of golden-shod and dancing days,
And the old green-girt sweet-hearted
earth,
Desire what here no spells can raise.
Far hence, with holier heavens above,
The lovely city of my love
Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air
That flows round no fair thing more
fair,
Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there
More pure the intense white height of
air,
More clear men's eyes that mine would
meet,
And the sweet springs of things more
sweet.
There, for this one warm note of doves
A clamor of a thousand loves
Storms the night's ear, the day's assails,
From the tempestuous nightingales,
And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved!
Italian, and a maiden crowned,
Siena, my feet are no more moved
Toward thy strange-shapen moun-
tain-bound;
But my heart in me turns and moves,
O lady loveliest of my loves,
Toward thee, to lie before thy feet,
And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat
Up the sheer street;

And the house midway hanging see
That saw Saint Catherine bodily,
Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,
And the live light of fiery love
Burn from her beautiful strange face,
As in the sanguine sacred place
Where in pure hands she took the head
Severed, and with pure lips still red
Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the
saints,
In quiet without cease she wrought,
Till cries of men and fierce complaints
From outward moved her maiden
thought;
And prayers she heard and sighs toward
France, —
"God, send us back deliverance,

Send back thy servant, lest we die!"
With an exceeding bitter cry
They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands
She took the sorrows of the lands,
With maiden palms she lifted up
The sick time's blood-imbittered cup,
And in her virgin garment furled
The faint limbs of a wounded world.
Clothed with calm love and clear desire,
She went forth in her soul's attire,
A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove
It shone, and over heads of kings;
And molten in red flames of love
Were swords and many monstrous things;
And shields were lowered, and snapt were spears,
And sweeter-tuned the clamorous years;
And faith came back, and peace, that were
Fled; for she bade, saying, "Thou, God's heir,
Hast thou no care?

"Lo, men lay waste thine heritage
Still, and much heathen people rage
Against thee, and devise vain things.
What comfort in the face of kings,
What counsel is there? Turn thine eyes
And thine heart from them in like wise;
Turn thee unto thine holy place
To help us that of God for grace
Require thy face.

"For who shall hear us if not thou
In a strange land? what doest thou there?
Thy sheep are spoiled, and the ploughers plough
Upon us: why hast thou no care
For all this, and beyond strange hills
Liest unregardful what snow chills
Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat?
Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,
Thy lost sheep bleat.

"And strange men feed on faultless lives,
And there is blood, and men put knives
Shepherd, unto the young lamb's throat
And one hath eaten, and one smote,
And one had hunger and is fed
Full of the flesh of these, and red
With blood of these as who drinks wine.
And God knoweth, who hath sent the a sign,
If these were thine."

But the Pope's heart within him burned
So that he rose up, seeing the sign
And came among them; but she turned
Back to her daily way divine,
And fed her faith with silent things,
And lived her life with curbed white wings,
And mixed herself with heaven, and died;
And now on the sheer city-side
Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,
Where walls shut out the flame and bloom
Of full-breathed summer, and the roof
Keeps the keen ardent air aloof
And sweet weight of the violent sky:
There bodily beheld on high,
She seems as one hearing in tune
Heaven within heaven, at heaven's full noon,
In sacred swoon, —

A solemn swoon of sense that aches
With imminent blind heat of heaven
While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,
Vigilant of the supreme Seven,
Whose choral flames in God's sight move,
Made unendurable with love,
That without wind or blast of breath
Compels all things, through life and death,
Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall
Thy mighty touch memorial,
Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,
And fixed for us her heavenly head;

nd, rent with plaited thorn and rod,
ared the live likeness of her God
o men's eyes turning from strange lands,
Where, pale from thine immortal hands,
Christ wounded stands;

nd the blood blots his holy hair
And white brows over hungering eyes
hat plead against us, and the fair
Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs
n the great torment that bends down
lis bruised head with the bloomless crown,
White as the unfruitful thorn-flower, —
God beheld in dreams that were
Beheld of her.

n vain on all these sins and years
alls the sad blood, fall the slow tears, —
n vain poured forth as water-springs,
riests, on your altars, and ye, kings,
bout your seats of sanguine gold:
till your God, spat upon and sold,
leeds at your hands; but now is gone
ll his flock from him saving one, —
Judas alone.

urely your race it was that he,
O men signed backward with his name!
eholding in Gethsemane,
Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,
nowing how the word of Christian should
lean to men evil and not good,
eem to men shameful for your sake,
Whose lips, for all the prayers they make,
Man's blood must slake.

ut blood nor tears ye love not, you
hat my love leads my longing to,
air as the world's old faith of flowers,
golden goddesses of ours!
rom what Idalian rose-pleasance
ath Aphrodite bidden glance
he lovelier lightnings of your feet?
rom what sweet Paphian sward or seat
Led you more sweet?

O white three sisters, three as one,
With flower-like arms for flowery bands,
Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,
And time lies beaten at your hands.
Time and wild years and wars and men
Pass, and ye care not whence or when;
With calm lips over-sweet for scorn,
Ye watch night pass, O children born
Of the old-world morn!

Ah! in this strange and shrineless place,
What doth a goddess, what a Grace,
Where no Greek worships her shrined limbs
With wreaths and Cytherean hymns?
Where no lute makes luxurious
The adoring airs in Amathus,
Till the maid, knowing her mother near,
Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear?
What do ye here?

For the outer land is sad, and wears
A raiment of a flaming fire;
And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs
Climb, yet seem wroth and loath to aspire, —
Climb, and break, and are broken down,
And through their clefts and crests the town
Looks west, and sees the dead sun lie,
In sanguine death that stains the sky
With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without
In twilight, in the time of doubt,
One sound comes of one whisper, where
Moved with low motions of slow air
The great trees nigh the castle swing
In the sad-colored evening:
"*Ricorditi di me, che son*
La Pia," — that small sweet word alone
Is not yet gone.

"*Ricorditi di me*," — the sound
Sole out of deep dumb days remote,
Across the fiery and fatal ground
Comes tender as a hurt bird's note
To where, a ghost with empty hands,
A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands
In the mid city, where the strong
Bells turn the sunset air to song,
And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,
A mightier maiden's likeness came
Late among mourning men that slept;
A sacred ghost that went and wept,
White as the passion-wounded Lamb,
Saying, "Ah, remember me, that am
Italia." (From deep sea to sea
Earth heard, earth knew her, that this
was she.)
"*Ricorditi.*

"Love made me of all things fairest
thing,
And Hate unmade me; this knows
he
Who with God's sacerdotal ring
Enringed mine hand, espousing me."
Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,
Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so?
Have not our hearts within us stirred,
O thou most holiest, at thy word?
Have we not heard?

As this dead tragic land that she
Found deadly, such was time to thee;
Years passed thee withering in the red
Maremma, — years that deemed thee
dead,
Ages that sorrowed or that scorned;
And all this while, though all they
mourned,
Thou sawest the end of things unclean,
And the unborn that should see thee a
queen.
Have we not seen?

The weary poet, thy sad son,
Upon thy soil, under thy skies,
Saw all Italian things save one, —
Italia: this thing missed his eyes;
The old mother-might, the breast, the
face,
That reared, that lit the Roman race, —
This not Leopardi saw; but we,
What is it, Mother, that we see, —
What, if not thee?

Look thou from Siena southward home,
Where the priest's pall hangs rent on
Rome,
And through the red rent swaddling-
bands
Toward thine she strains her labouring
hands.

Look thou and listen, and let be
All the dead quick, all the bond free;
In the blind eyes let there be sight;
In the eighteen centuries of the night
Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,
Sweet, and with lips of living brea
Kiss thy sons sleeping and thy dead,
That there be no more sleep
death.
Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,
Whom thy face seen afar above
Drew to thy feet: and when, being fre
Thou hast blest thy children born
thee,
Bless also me, —

Me, that when others played or slept,
Sat still under thy cross, and wept;
Me, who so early and unaware
Felt fall on bent bared brows and ha
(Thin drops of the overflowing flood
The bitter blessing of thy blood,
The sacred shadow of thy pain,
Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain
And raised again;

Me, consecrated, if I might,
To praise thee, or to love at least,
O mother of all men's dear delight,
Thou madest a choral-souled bo
priest,
Before my lips had leave to sing,
Or my hands hardly strength to cling
About the intolerable tree
Whereto they had nailed my heart a
thee,
And said, "Let be."

For to thee too, the high Fates gave
Grace to be sacrificed and save,
That being arisen, in the equal sun,
God and the People should be one;
By those red roads thy footprints tro
Man more divine, more human God,
Saviour; that where no light w
known
But darkness, and a daytime flown,
Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy!
For our feet falter in the night.
O lamp of living years to be,
O light of God, let there be light!
Fill with a love keener than flame
Men sealed in spirit with thy name,
The cities and the Roman skies,
Where men with other than man's eyes
Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast, and thine were they,
Whose names outshine thy very day:
For they are thine, and theirs thou art,
Whose blood beats living in man's heart,
Remembering ages fled and dead
Wherein for thy sake these men bled;
They that saw Trebia, they that see
Mentana, they in years to be
That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours
Thou; till the seasons bring to birth
A perfect people, and all the powers
Be with them that bear fruit on earth:
Till the inner heart of man be one
With freedom, and the sovereign sun;
And Time, in likeness of a guide,
Lead the Republic as a bride
Up to God's side.

COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead Love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O hearts whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

TIRESIAS.

PART I.

IT is an hour before the hour of dawn.
Set in mine hand my staff, and leave me here
Outside the hollow house that blind men fear,
More blind than I who live on life withdrawn,
And feel on eyes that see not but foresee
The shadow of death which clothes Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies
Dead, if man living know what thing is death,
If life be all made up of blood and breath,
And no sense be save as of ears and eyes.
But heart there is not, tongue there is not found,
To think or sing what verge hath life or bound.

In the beginning when the powers that made
The young child man a little loved him, seeing
His joy of life and fair face of his being,
And bland and laughing with the man-child played,
As friends they saw on our divine one day,
King Cadmus take to queen Harmonia.

The strength of soul that builds up as with hands,
Walls spiritual and towers and towns of thought
Which only fate, not force, can bring to naught,
Took then to wife the light of all men's lands,
War's child, and love's, most sweet and wise and strong.
Order of things and rule and guiding song.

It was long since: yea, even the sun that saw
Remembers hardly what was, nor how long;
And now the wise heart of the worldly song
Is perished, and the holy hand of law
Can set no tune on time, nor help again
The power of thought to build up life for men.

Yea, surely are they now transformed or dead,
And sleep below this world, where no sun warms,
Or move about it now in formless forms
Incognizable, and all their lordship fled;
And where they stood up singing, crawl and hiss
With fangs that kill behind their lips that kiss.

Yet though her marriage-garment, seeming fair,
Was dyed in sin and woven of jealousy
To turn their seed to poison, time shall see
The gods re-issue from them, and repair
Their broken stamp of godhead, and again
Thought and wise love sing words of law to men.

I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes
Much evil, and the misery of men's hands
Who sow with fruitless wheat th
stones and sands,
With fruitful thorns the fallows an
warm glebes,
Bade their hands hold lest worse ha
come to pass,
But which of you had heed of Tir
sias?

I am as Time's self in mine own we
ried mind,
Whom the strong heavy-footed yea
have led
From night to night and dead me
unto dead,
And from the blind hope to the mem
ory blind;
For each man's life is woven, a
Time's life is,
Of blind young hopes and old blin
memories.

I am a soul outside of death and birth
I see before me and afterward I see
O child, O corpse, the live dead fac
of thee,
Whose life and death are one thin
upon earth
Where day kills night and night agai
kills day
And dies; but where is that Harm
nia?

O all-beholden light not seen of me!
Air, and warm winds that under th
sun's eye
Stretch your strong wings at mor
ing; and thou, sky,
Whose hollow circle engirdling eart
and sea
All night the set stars limit, and a
day
The moving sun remeasures; y
I say, —

Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircea
spring
Inviolable, and ye towers that sa
cast down
Seven kings keen-sighted toward yo
seven-faced town,
And quenched the red seed of one sigh
less king;

And thou, for death less dreadful than for birth,
Whose wild leaves hide the horror of the earth, —

O mountain whereon gods made chase of kings,
Cithæon, thou that sawest on Pentheus dead
Fangs of a mother fasten, and wax red,
And satiate with a son thy swollen springs,
And heardst her cry fright all thine eyries' nests
Who gave death suck at sanguine-suckling breasts;

Yea, and a grief more grievous, without name,
A curse too grievous for the name of grief,
Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor scare belief
Even unto death and madness, when the flame
Was lit whose ashes dropped about the pyre
That of two brethren made one sundering fire;

O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare knees
Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed child
Whose hands should be more bloodily defiled
And the old blind feet walk wearier ways than these,
Whose seed, brought forth in darkness unto doom,
Should break as fire out of his mother's womb;

I bear you witness as ye bear to me,
Time, day, night, sun, stars, life, death, air, sea, earth,
And ye that round the human house of birth
Watch with veiled heads and weaponed hands, and see
Good things and evil, strengthless yet and dumb,
Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours to come;

Ye forces without form and viewless powers
That have the keys of all our years in hold,
That prophesy too late with tongues of gold,
In a strange speech whose words are perished hours,
I witness to you what good things ye give
As ye to me what evil while I live.

What should I do to blame you, what to praise,
For floral hours and hours funereal?
What should I do to curse or bless at all
For winter-woven or summer-colored days?
Curse he that will, and bless you whoso can:
I have no common part in you with man.

I hear a springing water, whose quick sound
Makes softer the soft, sunless, patient air,
And the wind's hand is laid on my thin hair
Light as a lover's, and the grasses round
Have odors in them of green bloom and rain,
Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep kisses pain.

I hear the low sound of the spring of time
Still beating as the low live throb of blood,
And where its waters gather head and flood
I hear change moving on them, and the chime
Across them of reverberate wings of hours
Sounding, and feel the future air of flowers.

The wind of change is soft as snow, and sweet
The sense thereof as roses in the sun,
The faint wind springing with the springs that run,
The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes, and heat
Of unbeholden sunrise; yet how long
I know not, till the morning put forth song.

I prophesy of life, who live with death;
Of joy, being sad; of sunlight, who am blind;
Of man, whose ways are alien from mankind
And his lips are not parted with man's breath:
I am a word out of the speechless years,
The tongue of time, that no man sleeps who hears.

I stand a shadow across the door of doom
Athwart the lintel of death's house, and wait;
Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by fate,
Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the tomb;
A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,
Driven between days that shall be and that were.

I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,
Of death cast out, and life devouring death
As flame doth wood and stubble with a breath;
Of freedom, though all manhood were one slave;
Of truth, though all the world were liar; of love,
That time nor hate can raze the witness of.

Life that was given for love's sake and his law's,
Their powers have no more power on: they divide
Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of man or pride,
And keen oblivion without pity or pause
Sets them on fire, and scatters the on air
Like ashes shaken from a suppliant hair.

But life they lay no hand on; life onc given
No force of theirs hath competenc to take;
Life that was given for some divir thing's sake,
To mix the bitterness of earth wit heaven,
Light with man's night, and mus with his breath,
Dies not, but makes its living foc of death.

I have seen this, who live where me are not,
In the high starless air of fruitf night,
On that serenest and obscurest heig
Where dead and unborn things are or in thought,
And whence the live unconquerab springs
Feed full of force the torrents of ne things.

I have seen this, who saw long sinc being man,
As now I know not if indeed I be,
The fair bare Lody of Wisdom, goc to see
And evil, whence my light and nig began;
Light on the goal and darkness on th way,
Light all through night and darkne all through day.

Mother, that by that Pegasean spring
Didst fold round in thine arms th blinded son,
Weeping, "O holiest, what thing ha thou done,
What, to my child? woe's me that s the thing!
Is this thy love to me-ward, ar hereof
Must I take sample how the gods c love?

"O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor child of mine,
The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare in sight,
But never shalt see more the dear sun's light;
O Helicon, how great a pay is thine
For some poor antelopes and wild-deer dead!
My child's eyes hast thou taken in their stead"—

Mother, thou knewest not what she had to give,
Thy goddess, though then angered, for mine eyes;
Fame and foreknowledge, and to be most wise,
And centuries of high-thoughted life to live,
And in mine hand this guiding staff to be
As eyesight to the feet of men that see.

Perchance I shall not die at all, nor pass
The general door and lintel of men dead;
Yet even the very tongue of wisdom said
What grace should come with death to Tiresias,
What special honor that god's hand accord
Who gathers all men's nations as their lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of thought
Is changed with obscuration, and the sense
Aches with long pain of hollow prescience,
And fiery foresight with fore-suffering bought
Seems even to infect my spirit and consume,
Hunger and thirst come on me for the tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death, and sleep,
And no more wrapped about with bitter dreams
Talk with the stars and with the winds and streams
And with the inevitable years, and weep;
For how should he who communes with the years
Be sometime not a living spring of tears?

O child, that guided of thine only will
Didst set thy maiden foot against the gate
To strike it open ere thine hour of fate,
Antigone, men say not thou didst ill,
For love's sake and the reverence of his awe
Divinely dying, slain by mortal law;

For love is awful as immortal death.
And through thee surely hath thy brother won
Rest, out of sight of our world-weary sun,
And in the dead land where ye ghosts draw breath
A royal place and honor; so wast thou
Happy, though earth have hold of thee too now.

So hast thou life and name inviolable,
And joy it may be, sacred and severe,
Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or fear,
A monumental joy wherein to dwell
Secluse and silent, a selected state,
Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead who live
Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken kind,
Nor as these are am I the prophet blind;
They have not life that have not heart to give
Life, nor have eyesight who lack heart to see
When to be not is better than to be.

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,
How long will ye be blind and dead, how long
Make your own souls part of your own soul's wrong?
Son of the word of the most high gods, man,
Why wilt thou make thine hour of light and breath
Emptier of all but shame than very death?

Fool, wilt thou live for ever? though thou care
With all thine heart for life to keep it fast,
Shall not thine hand forego it at the last?
Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the hair
Sleeping, or when thou knowest not, or wouldst fly;
And as men died much mightier, shalt thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more worth than thou;
The savor of heroic lives that were,
Is it not mixed into thy common air?
The sense of them is shed about thee now:
Feel not thy brows a wind blowing from far?
Aches not thy forehead with a future star?

The light that thou may'st make out of thy name
Is in the wind of this same hour that drives,
Blown within reach but once of all men's lives;
And he that puts forth hand upon the flame
Shall have it for a garland on his head
To sign him for a king among the dead.

But these men that the lessening years behold,
Who sit the most part without flame or crown,
And brawl and sleep, and wear their life-days down
With joys and griefs ignobler than of old,
And care not if the better day shall be, —
Are these or art thou dead, Antigone?

PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning dream,
And sees with instant eyes the naked thought
Whereof the vision as a web was wrought,
I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and gleam,
Ere yet the heart of the young sun waxed brave,
One like a prophet standing by a grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam or breath,
And all the colored hills and fields were gray,
And the wind wandered seeking for the day,
And wailed as though he had found her done to death,
And this gray hour had built to bury her
The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass
A pale and living body full of grace
There lying, and over it the prophet's face
Fixed; and the face was not of Tiresias,
For such a starry fire was in his eyes
As though their light it was that made the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when very love
Looked forth of them and set the sun aflame,
And such his lips that called the light by name
And bade the morning forth at sound thereof;

His face was sad and masterful as fate,
And like a star's his look compassionate.

Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so long
It seems to yearn with pity, and all its fire
As a man's heart to tremble with desire
And heave as though the light would bring forth song;
Yet from his face flashed lightning on the land,
And like the thunder-bearer's was his hand.

The steepness of strange stairs had tired his feet,
And his lips yet seemed sick of that salt bread
Wherewith the lips of banishment are fed;
But nothing was there in the world so sweet
As the most bitter love, like God's own grace,
Wherewith he gazed on that fair buried face.

Grief and glad pride and passion and sharp shame,
Wrath and remembrance, faith and hope and hate,
And pitiless pity of days degenerate,
Were in his eyes as an incorporate flame
That burned about her, and the heart thereof
And central flower was very fire of love.

But all about her grave wherein she slept
Were noises of the wild wind-footed years
Whose footprints flying were full of blood and tears,
Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills that leapt
And yelled as beasts of ravin, and their meat
Was the rent flesh of their own sons to eat.

And fiery shadows passing with strange cries,
And sphinx-like shapes about the ruined lands,
And the red reek of parricidal hands
And intermixture of incestuous eyes,
And light as of that self-divided flame
Which made an end of the Cadmean name.

And I beheld again, and lo the grave,
And the bright body laid therein as dead,
And the same shadow across another head
That bowed down silent on that sleeping slave
Who was the lady of empire from her birth
And light of all the kingdoms of the earth.

Within the compass of the watcher's hand
All strengths of other men and divers powers
Were held at ease and gathered up as flowers;
His heart was as the heart of his whole land,
And at his feet as natural servants lay
Twilight and dawn and night and laboring day.

He was most awful of the sons of God.
Even now men seeing seemed at his lips to see
The trumpet of the judgment that should be,
And in his right hand terror for a rod,
And in the breath that made the mountains bow
The horned fire of Moses on his brow.

The strong wind of the coming of the Lord
Had blown as flame upon him, and brought down
On his bare head from heaven fire for a crown,
And fire was girt upon him as a sword
To smite and lighten, and on what ways he trod
There fell from him the shadow of a god.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment in his eyes,
He stood and saw the grief and shame endure
That he, though highest of angels, might not cure,
And the same sins done under the same skies,
And the same slaves to the same tyrants thrown,
And fain he would have slept, and fain been stone.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched the sleep
That sealed her sense whose eyes were suns of old;
And the night shut and opened, and behold,
The same grave where those prophets came to weep,
But she that lay therein had moved and stirred,
And where those twain had watched her stood a third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Paradise
With Love's name sealing up its starry speech;
The tripled might of hand that found in reach
All crowns beheld far off of all men's eyes,
Song, color, carven wonders of live stone,—
These were not, but the very soul alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,
The faith which takes of its own blood to give
That the dead veins of buried hope may live,
Came on her sleeping, face to naked face,
And from a soul more sweet than all the south
Breathed love upon her sealed and breathless mouth.

Between her lips the breath was blown as fire,
And through her flushed veins leapt the liquid life,
And with sore passion and ambiguous strife
The new birth rent her and the new desire,
The will to live, the competence to be,
The sense to hearken, and the soul to see

And the third prophet standing by her grave
Stretched forth his hand, and touched her; and her eyes
Opened as sudden suns in heaven might rise,
And her soul caught from his the faith to save;
Faith above creeds, faith beyond records, born
Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful morn.

For in the daybreak now that night was dead
The light, the shadow, the delight, the pain,
The purpose and the passion of those twain,
Seemed gathered on that third prophetic head;
And all their crowns were as one crown, and one
His face with her face in the living sun.

For even with that communion of their eyes
His whole soul passed into her, and made her strong;
And all the sounds and shows of shame and wrong,
The hand that slays, the lip that mocks and lies,
Temples and thrones that yet men seem to see, —
Are these dead, or art thou dead, Italy?

AN APPEAL.

I.

Art thou indeed among these,
Thou of the tyrannous crew,
The kingdoms fed upon blood,
O queen from of old of the seas,
England, — art thou of them too
That drink of the poisonous flood,
That hide under poisonous trees?

II.

Nay, thy name from of old,
Mother, was pure, or we dreamed;
Purer we held thee than this,
Purer fain would we hold;
So goodly a glory it seemed,
A fame so bounteous of bliss,
So more precious than gold.

III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,
That thou in the tempest of things
As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,
In the blood-red river of tears
Poured forth for the triumph of kings;
A safeguard, a sheltering land,
In the thunder and torrent of years.

IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,
Exiles, chosen of men,
Safe for thy sake in thy shade,
Sat down at thy feet and were free.
So men spake of thee then:
Now shall their speaking be stayed?
Ah, so let it not be!

V.

Not for revenge or affright,
Pride, or a tyrannous lust,
Cast from thee the crown of thy praise.
Mercy was thine in thy might;
Strong when thou wert, thou wert just;
Now, in the wrong-doing days,
Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

VI.

How should one charge thee, how sway,
Save by the memories that were?
Not thy gold, nor the strength of thy ships,
Nor the might of thine armies at bay,
Made thee, mother, most fair;
But a word from republican lips
Said in thy name, in thy day.

VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot?
Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff?
Blood of men guiltless was shed,
Children, and souls without spot,
Shed, but in places far off:
Let slaughter no more be, said
Milton; and slaughter was not.

VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,
Now, but now, by thy foes,
By the slaves that had slain their France,
And thee would slay as they slew —
"Down with her walls that enclose
Freemen that eye us askance,
Fugitives, men that are true!"

IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame,
From bondsman or freeman, — to be
Pure from pollution of slaves,
Clean of their sins, and thy name
Bloodless, innocent, free:
Now if thou be not, thy waves
Wash not from off thee thy shame.

X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,
Whoso in fear for the state
Cries for surety of blood,
Help of gibbet and grave;
Neither is any land great
Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,
These things only can save.

XI.

Lo! how fair from afar,
Taintless of tyranny, stands
Thy mighty daughter, for years
Who trod the winepress of war,—
Shines with immaculate hands;
Slays not a foe, neither fears;
Stains not peace with a scar.

XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,
England; be not as these,
Thou that wert other than they.
Stretch out thine hand, but to save;
Put forth thy strength, and release:
Lest there arise, if thou slay,
Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.

Nov. 20, 1867.

PERINDE AC CADAVER.

In a vision Liberty stood
By the childless charm-stricken bed
Where, barren of glory and good,
Knowing naught if she would not or would,
England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,
Her hands that were strong to strive,
Her eyes whence battle had lightened,
Over all was a drawn shroud tightened
To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream,
With gray lips arid and cold:
She saw not the face as a beam
Burn on her, but only a gleam
Through her sleep as of new-stamped gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears
In the light of her down-drawn eyes,
Spake fire in the dull sealed ears:
"Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,
Wilt thou sleep now indeed, or arise?

"With dreams, and with words, and with light
Memories and empty desires,
Thou hast wrapped thyself round all night:
Thou hast shut up thine heart from the right,
And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

"Yet once, if I smote at thy gate,
Thy sons would sleep not, but heard:
O thou that wast found so great,
Art thou smitten with folly or fate,
That thy sons have forgotten my word?

"O Cromwell's mother, O breast
That suckled Milton! thy name
That was beautiful then, that was blest,
Is it wholly discrowned and deprest,
Trodden under by sloth into shame?

"Why wilt thou hate me and die?
For none can hate me and live.
What ill have I done to thee? why
Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and fly,
Who would follow thy feet and forgive?

"Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,
What is it to me? I am strong:
Thou hast seen me bowed down on my dead,
And laughed, and lifted thine head,
And washed thine hands of my wrong.

"Thou has put out the soul of thy sight:
Thou hast sought to my foemen as friend,
To my traitors that kiss me and smite,
To the kingdoms and empires of night
That begin with the darkness, and end.

"Turn thee, awaken, arise,
With the light that is risen on the lands,
With the change of the fresh-colored skies:
Set thine eyes on mine eyes,
Lay thy hands in my hands."

She moved and mourned as she heard,
Sighed, and shifted her place,
As the wells of her slumber were stirred
By the music and wind of the word,
Then turned, and covered her face.

"Ah!" she said in her sleep,
"Is my work not done with, and done?
Is there corn for my sickle to reap?
And strange is the pathway, and steep,
And sharp overhead is the sun.

"I have done thee service enough,
Loved thee enough in my day:
Now nor hatred nor love
Nor hardly remembrance thereof
Lives in me to lighten my way.

"And is it not well with us here?
Is change as good as is rest?
What hope should move me, or fear
That eye should open or ear,
Who have long since won what is best?

"Where among us are such things
As turn men's hearts into hell?
Have we not queens without stings,
Scotched princes, and fangless kings?
Yea," she said, "we are well.

"We have filed the teeth of the snake
Monarchy: how should it bite?
Should the slippery slow thing wake,
It will not sting for my sake;
Yea," she said, "I do right."

So spake she, drunken with dreams,
Mad; but again in her ears
A voice as of storm-swelled streams
Spake: "No brave shame then redeems
Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears?

"Thy poor lie slain of thine hands,
Their starved limbs rot in thy sight;
As a shadow the ghost of thee stands
Among men living and lands,
And stirs not leftward or right.

"Freeman he is not, but slave,
Who stands not out on my side;
His own hand hollows his grave,
Nor strength is in me to save
Where strength is none to abide.

"Time shall tread on his name
That was written for honor of old,
Who hath taken in change for fame
Dust, and silver, and shame,
Ashes, and iron, and gold."

THE OBLATION.

Ask nothing more of me, sweet:
All I can give you, I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet;
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you sweet,
Think you and breathe you, and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

A SONG OF ITALY.

Upon a windy night of stars that fell
At the wind's spoken spell,
Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing light
From the clear gulf of night,
Between the fixed and fallen glories one
Against my vision shone,

More fair and fearful and divine than they
That measure night and day,
And worthier worship; and within mine eyes
The formless folded skies
Took shape and were unfolded like as flowers.
And I beheld the hours
As maidens, and the days as laboring men,
And the soft nights again
As wearied women to their own souls wed,
And ages as the dead.
And over these living, and them that died,
From one to the other side
A lordlier light than comes of earth or air
Made the world's future fair.
A woman like to love in face, but not
A thing of transient lot;
And like to hope, but having hold on truth;
And like to joy or youth,
Save that upon the rock her feet were set;
And like what men forget,
Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious peace,—
And yet like none of these,
Being not as these are mortal, but with eyes
That sounded the deep skies,
And clove like wings or arrows their clear way
Through night and dawn and day,—
So fair a presence over star and sun
Stood, making these as one.
For in the shadow of her shape were all
Darkened and held in thrall,
So mightier rose she past them; and I felt
Whose form, whose likeness knelt
With covered hair and face, and clasped her knees;
And knew the first of these
Was Freedom, and the second Italy.
And what sad words said she
For mine own grief I knew not, nor had heart
Therewith to bear my part
And set my songs to sorrow; nor to hear
How tear by sacred tear
Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that fall
In some slain feaster's hall
Where in mid music and melodious breath
Men singing have seen death.
So fair, so lost, so sweet, she knelt; or so
In our lost eyes below
Seemed to us sorrowing; and her speech being said,
Fell, as one who falls dead.
And for a little she too wept, who stood
Above the dust and blood
And thrones and troubles of the world then spake,
As who bids dead men wake:—

"Because the years were heavy on thy head;
Because dead things are dead;
Because thy chosen on hillside, city and plain
Are shed as drops of rain;
Because all earth was black, all heaven was blind,
And we cast out of mind;
Because men wept, saying *Freedom* knowing of thee,
Child, that thou wast not free:
Because wherever blood was not sham was
Where thy pure foot did pass;
Because on Promethean rocks distent
Thee fouler eagles rent;
Because a serpent stains with slime and foam
This that is not thy Rome;
Child of my womb, whose limbs were made in me,
Have I forgotten thee?
In all thy dreams through all these years on wing,
Hast thou dreamed such a thing?
The mortal mother-bird out-soars her nest,
The child outgrows the breast;
But suns as stars shall fall from heaven and cease,
Ere we twain be as these;

Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost sun,
Ere we twain be not one.
My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,
I have no heed of them
Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft or power;
But thou, that wast my flower,
The blossom bound between my brows, and worn
In sight of even and morn
From the last ember of the flameless west
To the dawn's baring breast —
I were not Freedom if thou wert not free,
Nor thou wert Italy.
O mystic rose ingrained with blood, impearled
With tears of all the world!
The torpor of their blind brute-ridden trance
Kills England and chills France;
And Spain sobs hard through strangling blood; and snows
Hide the huge eastern woes.
But thou, twin-born with morning, nursed of noon,
And blessed of star and moon!
What shall avail to assail thee any more,
From sacred shore to shore?
Have Time and Love not knelt down at thy feet,
Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet,
Fresh from the flints and mire of murderous ways
And dust of travelling days?
Hath Time not kissed them, Love not washed them fair,
And wiped with tears and hair?
Though God forget thee, I will not forget;
Though heaven and earth be set
Against thee, O unconquerable child,
Abused, abased, reviled,
Lift thou not less from no funereal bed
Thine undishonored head;
Love thou not less, by lips of thine once prest,
This my now barren breast;
Seek thou not less, being well assured thereof,
O child, my latest love.

For now the barren bosom shall bear fruit,
Songs leap from lips long mute,
And with my milk the mouths of nations fed
Again be glad and red
That were worn white with hunger and sorrow and thirst;
And thou, most fair and first,
Thou whose warm hands and sweet live lips I feel
Upon me for a seal,
Thou whose least looks, whose smiles and little sighs,
Whose passionate pure eyes,
Whose dear fair limbs that neither bonds could bruise
Nor hate of men misuse,
Whose flower-like breath and bosom, O my child,
O mine and undefiled,
Fill with such tears as burn like bitter wine
These mother's eyes of mine,
Thrill with huge passions and primeval pains
The fulness of my veins.
O sweetest head seen higher than any stands,
I touch thee with mine hands,
I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most sweet,
To lift thee on thy feet,
And with the fire of mine to fill thine eyes;
I say unto thee, Arise."

She ceased, and heaven was full of flame and sound,
And earth's old limbs unbound
Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew and seed
Shed through her at this her need:
And highest in heaven, a mother and full of grace,
With no more covered face,
With no more lifted hands and bended knees,
Rose, as from sacred seas
Love, when old time was full of plenteous springs,
That fairest-born of things,

The land that holds the rest in tender thrall
For love's sake in them all,
That binds with words and holds with eyes and hands
All hearts in all men's lands.
So died the dream whence rose the live desire
That here takes form and fire,
A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep
Risen, that ye should not weep, —
Should not weep more nor ever, O ye that hear,
And ever have held her dear,
Seeing now indeed she weeps not who wept sore,
And sleeps not any more.
Hearken ye towards her, O people, exalt your eyes;
Is this a thing that dies?

Italia! by the passion of the pain
That bent and rent thy chain;
Italia! by the breaking of the bands,
The shaking of the lands;
Beloved, O men's mother, O men's queen,
Arise, appear, be seen!
Arise, array thyself in manifold
Queen's raiment of wrought gold;
With girdles of green freedom, and with red
Roses, and white snow shed
Above the flush and frondage of the hills
That all thy deep dawn fills
And all thy clear night veils and warms with wings
Spread till the morning sings;
The rose of resurrection, and the bright
Breast lavish of the light,
The lady lily like the snowy sky
Ere the stars wholly die;
As red as blood, and whiter than a wave,
Flowers grown as from thy grave,
From the green fruitful grass in May-time hot,
Thy grave, where thou art not.
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred sign
Of the ancient earth divine,
The holy heart of things, the seed birth,
The mystical warm earth.
O thou her flower of flowers, with trel braid
Be thy sweet head arrayed,
In witness of her mighty motherhoo
Who bore thee and found th good,
Her fairest-born of children, on whc head
Her green and white and red
Are hope and light and life, inviolate
Of any latter fate.
Fly, O our flag, through deep Itali air,
Above the flags that were,
The dusty shreds of shameful batt flags
Trampled and rent in rags,
As withering woods in autumn's bitt est breath
Yellow, and black as death;
Black as crushed worms that sicken the sense,
And yellow as pestilence.
Fly, green as summer and red as da and white
As the live heart of light,
The blind bright womb of color unbo that brings
Forth all fair forms of things,
As freedom all fair forms of natic dyed
In divers-colored pride.
Fly fleet as wind on every wind th blows
Between her seas and snows,
From Alpine white, from Tuscan gre and where
Vesuvius reddens air.
Fly! and let all men see it, and all kir wail,
And priests wax faint and pale,
And the cold hordes that moan in mi places
And the funereal races
And the sick serfs of lands that w and wane
See thee and hate thee in vain.
In the clear laughter of all winds a waves,
In the blown grass of graves,

the long sound of fluctuant boughs
of trees,
In the broad breath of seas,
d the sound of thy flying folds be
heard;
And as a spoken word
ill of that fair god and that merciless
Who rends the Pythoness,
be the sound and so the fire that
saith
She feels her ancient breath
nd the old blood move in her im-
mortal veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,
ur mother, hast thou borne these many
years
While thy pure blood and tears
ixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian
sea.
Light things were said of thee,
s of one buried deep among the dead;
Yea, she hath been, they said,
ie was when time was younger, and is
not;
The very cerecloths rot
iat flutter in the dusty wind of death,
Not moving with her breath;
ir seasons and forgotten years enfold
Her dead corpse old and cold
ith many windy winters and pale
springs:
She is none of this world's things.
iough her dead head like a live gar-
land wear
The golden-growing hair
iat flows over her breast down to her
feet,
Dead queens, whose life was sweet
sight of all men living, have been
found
So cold, so clad, so crowned,
ith all things faded and with one
thing fair,
Their old immortal hair,
hen flesh and bone turned dust at
touch of day:
And she is dead as they.

men said sadly, mocking; so the
slave,
Whose life was his soul's grave;
So, pale or red with change of fast and
feast,
The sanguine-sandalled priest;
So the Austrian, when his fortune came
to flood,
And the warm wave was blood;
With wings that widened and with beak
that smote,
So shrieked through either throat
From the hot horror of its northern
nest
That double-headed pest;
So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud
and shame,
He of whom treason came,
The herdsman of the Gadarean swine;
So all his ravening kine,
Made fat with poisonous pasture: so
not we,
Mother, beholding thee.
Make answer, O the crown of all our
slain,
Ye that were one, being twain,
Twain brethren, twin-born to the sec-
ond birth,
Chosen out of all our earth
To be the prophesying stars that
say
How hard is night on day,
Stars in serene and sudden heaven re-
risen
Before the sun break prison
And ere the moon be wasted; fair first
flowers
In that red wreath of ours
Woven with the lives of all whose lives
were shed
To crown their mother's head
With leaves of civic cypress and thick
yew,
Till the olive bind it too,
Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves
That victory wears or weaves
At her fair feet for her beloved brow;
Hear, for she too hears now,
O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands;
O all heroic hands
Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all
her dead;
O many a holy head,
Bowed for her sake even to her redden-
ing dust;
O chosen, O pure and just,

Who counted for a small thing life's estate,
And died, and made it great;
Ye whose names mix with all her memories; ye
Who rather chose to see
Death, than our more intolerable things;
Thou whose name withers kings,
Agesilao; thou too, O chiefliest thou,
The slayer of splendid brow,
Laid where the lying lips of fear deride
The foiled tyrannicide,
Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy; being in fame,
Felice, like thy name,
Not like thy fortune; father of the fight,
Having in hand our light.
Ah, happy! for that sudden-swerving hand
Flung light on all thy land,
Yea, lit blind France with compulsory ray,
Driven down a righteous way;
Ah, happiest! for from thee the wars began,
From thee the fresh springs ran;
From thee the lady land that queens the earth
Gat as she gave new birth.
O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead of ours,
Fair in her eyes as flowers,
Fair without feature, vocal without voice,
Strong without strength, rejoice!
Hear it with ears that hear not, and on eyes
That see not let it rise,
Rise as a sundawn; be it as dew that drips
On dumb and dusty lips;
Eyes have ye not, and see it; neither ears,
And there is none but hears.
This is the same for whom ye bled and wept;
She was not dead, but slept.
This is that very Italy which was
And is and shall not pass.

But thou, though all were not well done, O chief,
Must thou take shame or grief?
Because one man is not as thou or
Must thou take shame for men?
Because the supreme sunrise is not
Is the young dew not wet?
Wilt thou not yet abide a little whi
Soul without fear or guile,
Mazzini,—O our prophet, O our pr
A little while at least?
A little hour of doubt and of contr
Sustain thy sacred soul;
Withhold thine heart, our father, an hour;
Is it not here, the flower,
Is it not blown and fragrant from root,
And shall not be the fruit?
Thy children, even thy people thou made,
Thine, with thy words arrayed,
Clothed with thy thoughts and girt thy desires,
Yearn up toward thee as fires.
Art thou not father, O father, of these?
From thine own Genoese
To where of nights the lower extr lagune
Feels its Venetian moon,
Nor suckling's mouth nor moth breast set free
But hath that grace through thee.
The milk of life on death's unnat brink
Thou gavest them to drink,
The natural milk of freedom; and a
They drank, and they were men.
The wine and honey of freedom an faith
They drank, and cast off death.
Bear with them now; thou art ho yet endure,
Till they as thou be pure.
Their swords at least that stemmed Austria's tide
Bade all its bulk divide;
Else, though fate bade them f breath's space fall,
She had not fallen at all.
Not by their hands they made ti promise true;
Not by their hands, but through.
Nor on Custoza ran their blood to w
Nor fell their fame defaced

Whom stormiest Adria with tumultuous tides
Whirles undersea and hides.
Not his, who from the sudden-settling deck
Looked over death and wreck
To where the mother's bosom shone, who smiled
As he, so dying, her child;
Or he smiled surely, dying, to mix his death
With her memorial breath;
Smiled, being most sure of her, that in no wise,
Die whoso will, she dies:
And she smiled surely, fair and far above,
Wept not, but smiled for love.
Thou too, O splendour of the sudden sword
That drove the crews abhorred
From Naples and the siren-footed strand,
Flash from thy master's hand,
Shine from the middle summer of the seas
To the old Æolides,
Outshine their fiery fumes of burning night,
Sword, with thy midday light;
Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene foam
To the rent heart of Rome,
From the island of her lover and thy lord,
Her savior and her sword.
In the fierce year of failure and of fame,
Art thou not yet the same
That wast as lightning swifter than all wings
In the blind face of kings?
When priests took counsel to devise despair,
And princes to forswear,
We clasped thee, O her sword and flag-bearer
And staff and shield to her,
Garibaldi! need was hers and grief,
Of thee and of the chief,
And of another girt in arms to stand
As good of hope and hand,
As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed
The heart should burn and bleed,
So but the spirit shake not nor the breast
Swerve, but abide its rest,
As theirs did and as thine, though ruin clomb
The highest wall of Rome,
Though treason stained and spilt her lustral water,
And slaves led slaves to slaughter,
And priests, praying and slaying, watched them pass
From a strange France, alas!
That was not freedom; yet when these were past
Thy sword and thou stood fast,
Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian waves
Hear now no sound of slaves,
And where thy sacred blood is fragrant still
Upon the Bitter Hill,
Seeing by that blood one country saved and stained,
Less loved thee crowned than chained,
And less now only than the chief: for he,
Father of Italy,
Upbore in holy hands the babe new-born
Through loss and sorrow and scorn,
Of no man led, of many men reviled;
Till, lo! the new-born child
Gone from between his hands, and in its place,
Lo, the fair mother's face.
Blessed is he of all men, being in one
As father to her and son,
Blessed of all men living, that he found
Her weak limbs bared and bound,
And in his arms and in his bosom bore,
And as a garment wore
Her weight of want, and as a royal dress
Put on her weariness.
As in faith's hoariest histories men read,
The strong man bore at need
Through roaring rapids when all heaven was wild
The likeness of a child
That still waxed greater and heavier as he trod,
And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the molten air,
O light of days that were,
And light of days that shall be; land and sea,
And heaven and Italy:
Praise him, O storm and summer, shore and wave,
O skies and every grave;
O weeping hopes, O memories beyond tears,
O many and murmuring years,
O sounds far off in time and visions far,
O sorrow with thy star,
And joy with all thy beacons; ye that mourn,
And ye whose light is born;
O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,
Praise him from tomb and prison,
Praise him from heaven and sunlight; and ye floods,
And windy waves of woods;
Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit lakes
And happier hillside brakes,
Untrampled by the accursed feet that trod
Fields golden from their god,
Fields of their god forsaken, whereof none
Sees his face in the sun,
Hears his voice from the floweriest wildernesses;
And, barren of his tresses,
Ye bays unplucked and laurels unintwined,
That no men break or bind,
And myrtles long forgetful of the sword,
And olives unadored,
Wisdom and love, white hands that save and slay,
Praise him; and ye as they,
Praise him, O gracious might of dews and rains
That feed the purple plains,
O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel drawn,
O cloud and fire and dawn;
Red hills of flame, white Alps, green Apennines,
Banners of blowing pines,
Standards of stormy snows, flags of li
leaves,
Three wherewith Freedom weaves
One ensign that once woven and o
unfurled
Makes day of all a world,
Makes blind their eyes who knew
and outbraves
The waste of iron waves;
Ye fields of yellow fulness, ye fr
fountains,
And mists of many mountains;
Ye moons and seasons, and ye d
and nights;
Ye starry-headed heights,
And gorges melting sunward from
snow,
And all strong streams that flow,
Tender as tears, and fair as faith,
pure
As hearts made sad and sure
At once by many sufferings and one lo
O mystic deathless dove
Held to the heart of earth and in
hands
Cherished, O lily of lands,
White rose of time, dear dream
praises past, —
For such as these thou wast,
That art as eagles setting to the sun
As fawns that leap and run,
As a sword carven with keen floral g
Sword for an armed god's hold,
Flower for a crowned god's forehead
O our land,
Reach forth thine holiest hand,
O mother of many sons and memori
Stretch out thine hand to his
That raised and gave thee life to
and leap
When thou wast full of sleep,
That touched and stung thee with yo
blood and breath
When thou wast hard on death.
Praise him, O all her cities and
crowns,
Her towers and thrones of towns
O noblest Brescia, scarred from foo
head
And breast-deep in the dead,
Praise him from all the glories of
graves
That yellow Mela laves

ith gentle and golden water, whose fair flood
Ran wider with thy blood:
aise him, O born of that heroic breast,
O nursed thereat and blest,
rona, fairer than thy mother fair,
But not more brave to bear:
aise him, O Milan, whose imperial tread
Bruised once the German head;
hose might, by northern swords left desolate,
Set foot on fear and fate:
aise him, O long mute mouth of melodies,
Mantua, with louder keys,
ith mightier chords of music even than rolled
From the large harps of old,
hen thy sweet singer of golden throat and tongue,
Praising his tyrant, sung;
ough now thou sing not as of other days,
Learn late a better praise.
ot with the sick sweet lips of slaves that sing,
Praise thou no priest or king,
brow-bound laurel of discolored leaf,
But him, the crownless chief.
aise him, O star of sun-forgotten times,
Among their creeds and crimes
at wast a fire of witness in the night,
Padua, the wise men's light:
aise him, O sacred Venice, and the sea
That now exults through thee,
ll of the mighty morning and the sun,
Free of things dead and done;
aise him from all the years of thy great grief,
That shook thee like a leaf
th winds and snows of torment, rain that fell
Red as the rains of hell,
rms of black thunder and of yellow flame,
And all ill things but shame;
aise him with all thy holy heart and strength;
Through thy walls' breadth and length
Praise him with all thy people, that their voice
Bid the strong soul rejoice,
The fair clear supreme spirit beyond stain,
Pure as the depth of pain,
High as the head of suffering, and secure
As all things that endure.
More than thy blind lord of an hundred years
Whose name our memory hears,
Home-bound from harbors of the Byzantine
Made tributary of thine,
Praise him who gave no gifts from over-sea,
But gave thyself to thee.
O mother Genoa, through all years that run,
More than that other son,
Who first beyond the seals of sunset prest
Even to the unfooted west,
Whose back-blown flag scared from their sheltering seas
The unknown Atlantides,
And as flame climbs through cloud and vapor clomb
Through streams of storm and foam,
Till half in sight they saw land heave and swim, —
More than this man praise him.
One found a world new-born from virgin sea;
And one found Italy.
O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths of flowers
Fed by melodious hours,
From each sweet mouth that kisses light and air,
Thou whom thy fate made fair,
As a bound vine or any flowering tree,
Praise him who made thee free.
For no grape-gatherers trampling out the wine
Tread thee, the fairest vine;
For no man binds thee, no man bruises, none
Does with thee as these have done.
From where spring hears loud through her long lit vales
Triumphant nightingales,

In many a fold of fiery foliage hidden,
Withheld as things forbidden,
But clamorous with innumerable delight
In May's red, green, and white,
In the far-floated standard of the spring,
That bids men also sing,
Our flower of flags, our witness that we are free,
Our lamp for land and sea;
From where Majano feels through corn and vine,
Spring move and melt as wine,
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose
The immeasurable rose;
From hillsides plumed with pine, and heights wind-worn
That feel the refluent morn,
Or where the moon's face warm and passionate
Burns, and men's hearts grow great,
And the swoln eyelids labor with sweet tears,
And in their burning ears
Sound throbs like flame, and in their eyes new light
Kindles the trembling night;
From faint illumined fields and starry valleys
Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,
From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise
One Tuscan tune of praise.
O lordly city of the field of death,
Praise him with equal breath,
From sleeping streets and gardens, and the stream
That threads them as a dream
Threads without light the untravelled ways of sleep
With eyes that smile or weep;
From the sweet sombre beauty of wave and wall
That fades and does not fall;
From colored domes and cloisters fair with fame,
Praise thou and thine his name.
Thou too, O little laurelled town of towers,
Clothed with the flame of flowers,
From windy ramparts girdled with young gold,
From thy sweet hillside fold
Of wallflowers and the acacia's be bloom
And every blowing plume,
Halls that saw Dante speaking, cha fair
As the outer hills and air,
Praise him who feeds the fire that Da fed,
Our highest heroic head,
Whose eyes behold through flo cloud and flame
The maiden face of fame
Like April's in Valdelsa; fair as flow
And patient as the hours;
Sad with slow sense of time, and br with faith
That levels life and death;
The final fame, that with a foot lime
Treads down reluctant time;
The fame that waits and watches an wise,
A virgin with chaste eyes,
A goddess who takes hands with g men's grief;
Praise her, and him, our chief.
Praise him, O Siena, and thou her d green spring,
O Fonte Branda, sing:
Shout from the red clefts of thy crags,
Shake out thy flying flags
In the long wind that streams from to hill;
Bid thy full music fill
The desolate red waste of sunset ai
And fields the old time saw fair,
But now the hours ring void thro ruined lands,
Wild work of mortal hands;
Yet through thy dead Maremma le name
Take flight and pass in flame,
And the red ruin of disastrous hou
Shall quicken into flowers.
Praise him, O fiery child of sun and
Naples, who bade thee be;
For till he sent the swords that sco and save,
Thou wast not, but thy grave.
But more than all these praise him give thanks,
Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,

From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome,—
Praise him, O risen Rome!
Let all thy children cities at thy knee
Lift up their voice with thee,
Saying, "For thy love's sake and our perished grief
We laud thee, O our chief!"
Saying, "For thine hand and help when hope was dead
We thank thee, O our head!"
Saying, "For thy voice and face within our sight
We bless thee, O our light;
For waters cleansing us from days defiled
We praise thee, O our child!"

So with an hundred cities' mouths in one
Praising thy supreme son,
Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid and mother,
Our queen, who serve none other,
Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of grace,
Turn otherwhere thy face,
Turn for a little and look what things are these
Now fallen before thy knees;
Turn upon them thine eyes who hated thee,
Behold what things they be,
Italia: these are stubble that were steel,
Dust, or a turning wheel;
As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were so strong;
And howl, for all their song,
And wail, for all their wisdom; they that were
So great, they are all stript bare;
They are all made empty of beauty, and all abhorred;
They are shivered, and their sword;
They are slain who slew, they are heartless who were wise;
Yea, turn on these thine eyes,
O thou, soliciting with soul sublime
The obscure soul of time,
Thou, with the wounds thy holy body bears
From broken swords of theirs,
Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that have bled
Tears for thy thousands dead,
And upon these, whose swords drank up like dew
The sons of thine they slew,
These, whose each gun blasted with murdering mouth
Live flowers of thy fair south,
These, whose least evil told in alien ears
Turned men's whole blood to tears,
These, whose least sin remembered for pure shame
Turned all those tears to flame,
Even upon these, when breaks the extreme blow
And all the world cries woe,
When heaven reluctant rains long-suffering fire
On these and their desire,
When his wind shakes them and his waters whelm
Who rent thy robe and realm,
When they that poured thy dear blood forth as wine
Pour forth their own for thine,
On these, on these have mercy; not in hate,
But full of sacred fate,
Strong from the shrine and splendid from the god,
Smite, with no second rod.
Because they spared not, do thou rather spare:
Be not one thing they were.
Let not one tongue of theirs who hate thee say
That thou wast even as they.
Because their hands were bloody, be thine white;
Show light where they shed night:
Because they are foul, be thou the rather pure;
Because they are feeble, endure;
Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,
O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in trust
Their names, their deeds, their dust,
Who held life less than thou wert; be the least
To thee indeed a priest,

Priest and burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice
Given without prayer or price,
A holier immolation than men wist,
A costlier eucharist,
A sacrament more saving; bend thine head
Above these many dead
Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes
Their lowest head that lies.
Speak from thy lips of immemorial speech
If but one word for each.
Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's mouth
Fallen dumb or north or south;
And laying but once thine hand on brow and breast,
Bless them, through whom thou art blest.
And saying in ears of these thy dead "Well done,"
Shall they not hear, "O son?"
And bowing thy face to theirs made pale for thee,
Shall the shut eyes not see?
Yea, through the hollow-hearted world of death,
As light, as blood, as breath,
Shall there not flash and flow the fiery sense,
The pulse of prescience?
Shall not these know as in times overpast
Thee loftiest to the last?
For times and wars shall change, kingdoms and creeds,
And dreams of men, and deeds;
Earth shall grow gray with all her golden things,
Pale peoples and hoar kings;
But though her thrones and towers of nations fall,
Death has no part in all;
In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,
Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.
Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,
But live thou though they die;
Let their flags fade as flowers that storm can mar,
But thine be like a star;
Let England's, if it float not for men free,
Fall, and forget the sea;
Let France's, if it shadow a hatefu
head,
Drop as a leaf drops dead;
Thine let what storm soever smite th
rest
Smite as it seems him best;
Thine let the wind that can, by sea o
land,
Wrest from thy banner-hand.
Die they in whom dies freedom, die an
cease,
Though the world weep for these;
Live thou, and love and lift when thes
lie dead
The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in band
The kingdomless far lands,
And link the chainless ages; thou tha
wast
With England ere she past
Among the faded nations, and shalt b
Again, when sea to sea
Calls through the wind and light o
morning time,
And throneless clime to clime
Makes antiphonal answer; thou that a
Where one man's perfect heart
Burns, one man's brow is brightened fo
thy sake,
Thine, strong to make or break;
O fair Republic hallowing with stretche
hands
The limitless free lands,
When all men's heads for love, not fea
bow down
To thy sole royal crown,
As thou to freedom; when man's lif
smells sweet,
And at thy bright swift feet
A bloodless and a bondless world
laid;
Then, when thy men are made,
Let these indeed as we in dreams b
hold
One chosen of all thy fold,
One of all fair things fairest, one exal
Above all fear or fault,
One unforgetful of unhappier men
And us who loved her then;
With eyes that outlook suns and drea
on graves;
With voice like quiring waves;

With heart the holier for their memories' sake
Who slept that she might wake;
With breast the sweeter for that sweet blood lost,
And all the milkless cost;
Lady of earth, whose large equality
Bends but to her and thee;
Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,
And splendid from quenched tears;
Strong with old strength of great things fallen and fled,
Diviner for her dead;
Chaste of all stains and perfect from all scars,
Above all storms and stars,
All winds that blow through time, all waves that foam, —
Our Capitolian Rome.

THALASSIUS.

Upon the flowery forefront of the year,
One wandering by the gray-green April sea
Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand,
Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewellery
Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer
Along the foam-flowered strand,
Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land
Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,
A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that gleamed
To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,
Too sure of either love for either's fear,
Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed
Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but fair
As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,
That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea
The last time ere that year,
Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë
Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright sphere
Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence trod
The live sun's very god,
Across the foam-bright water-ways that are
As heavenlier heavens, with star for answering star;
And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth
Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,
And heard above afar
A noise of songs and wind-enamoured wings,
And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,
And round the resonant radiance of his car
Where depth is one with height,
Light heard as music, music seen as light;
And with that second moondawn of the spring's
That fosters the first rose,
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows
Was born out of the world of sunless things
That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea,
And took to foster like a graft of earth,
Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest birth,
Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free;
A warrior gray with glories more than years,
Though more of years than change the quick to dead
Had rained their light and darkness on his head;
A singer that in time's and memory's ears
Should leave such words to sing as all his peers

Might praise with hallowing heat of rapturous tears,
Till all the days of human flight were fled.
And at his knees his fosterling was fed,
Not with man's wine and bread,
Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and fears,
But food of deep memorial days long sped;
For bread with wisdom, and with song for wine,
Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.
And from his grave glad lips the boy would gather
Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than gold,
More sweet than bees make of the breathing heather,
That he, as glad and bold,
Might drink as they, and keep his spirit from cold.
And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair
As his own father's risen on the eastern air,
And that less white brow-binding bay-leaf bloom,
More than all flowers his father's eyes relume;
And those high songs he heard,
More than all notes of any landward bird,
More than all sounds less free
Than the wind's quiring to the choral sea.

High things the high song taught him: how the breath,
Too frail for life, may be more strong than death;
And this poor flash of sense in life, that gleams
As a ghost's glory in dreams,
More stabile than the world's own heart's root seems,
By that strong faith of lordliest love, which gives
To death's own sightless-seeming eyes a light
Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier might,
Than shines or strikes from any man that lives;
How he that loves life overmuch shal die
The dog's death, utterly;
And he that much less loves it than h hates
All wrong-doing that is done,
Anywhere always underneath the sun,
Shall live a mightier life than time's o fate's.
One fairer thing he showed him, an in might
More strong than day and night,
Whose strengths build up time's towe ing period;
Yea, one thing stronger and more hig than God,
Which, if man had not, then should Go not be:
And that was Liberty.
And gladly should man die to gain, h said,
Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, li dead.
For man's earth was not, nor the swee sea-waves
His, nor his own land, nor its ver graves,
Except they bred not, bore not, hid no slaves:
But all of all that is,
Were one man free in body and sou were his.

And the song softened, even a heaven by night
Softens, from sunnier down to starrie light,
And with its moon-bright breath
Blessed life for death's sake, and fo life's sake death;
Till as the moon's own beam and breat confuse,
In one clear hueless haze of glimmerin hues,
The sea's line, and the land's line, an the sky's,
And light for love of darkness almo dies,
As darkness only lives for light's de love,
Whose hands the robe of night is wove of:

So in that heaven of wondrous words were life
And death brought out of strife;
Yea, by that strong spell of serene increase,
Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind at morn
Flashes, and even with lightning of the wind
Night's thick-spun web is thinned,
And all its weft unwoven and overworn
Shrinks, as might love from scorn.
And as when wind and light, on water and land,
Leap as twin gods from heavenward hand in hand,
And with the sound and splendor of their leap
Strike darkness dead, and daunt the spirit of sleep,
And burn it up with fire;
So with the light that lightened from the lyre,
Was all the bright heat in the child's heart stirred,
And blown with blasts of music into flame,
Till even his sense became
Fire, as the sense that fires the singing bird,
Whose song calls night by name.
And in the soul within the sense began
The manlike passion of a godlike man,
And in the sense within the soul again
Thoughts that make men of gods, and gods of men.

For love the high song taught him, — love that turns
God's heart toward man as man's to Godward; love
That life and death and life are fashioned of,
From the first breath that burns
Half-kindled on the flower-like yeanling's lip
So light and faint that life seems like to slip,
To that yet weaklier drawn
When sunset dies of night's devouring dawn;
But the man dying not wholly as all men dies
If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise;
If aught of deed or word
Be seen for all time, or of all time heard.
Love, that though body and soul were overthrown,
Should live for love's sake of itself alone,
Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and dead,
Not wholly annihilated.
Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that the pyre
Drops, and forgets the thing was once afire,
And gave its heart to feed the pile's full flame
Till its own heart its own heat overcame,
Outlives its own life, though by scarce a span,
As such men dying outlive themselves in man,
Outlive themselves forever; if the heat
Outburn the heart that kindled it, the sweet
Outlast the flower whose soul it was, and flit
Forth of the body of it
Into some new shape of a strange perfume
More potent than its light live spirit of bloom, —
How shall not something of that soul re-live,
That only soul that had such gifts to give
As lighten something even of all men's doom,
Even from the laboring womb,
Even to the seal set on the unopening tomb?
And these the loving light of song and love
Shall wrap and lap round, and impend above,

Imperishable; and all springs born illume
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than wake the dove
To music, when the hillside winds resume
The marriage-song of heather-flower and broom
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him,—hate of all
That brings or holds in thrall
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God began,
The holy body and sacred soul of man.
And wheresoever a curse was, or a chain,
A throne for torment or a crown for bane
Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten pain,
There, said he, should man's heaviest hate be set
Inexorably, to faint not or forget
Till the last warmth bled forth of the last vein
In flesh that none should call a king's again,
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that plague-strike air
Leave the last bone of all the carrion bare.

And hope the high song taught him,—hope whose eyes
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the skies
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see
What earth beholds not, hear what wind and sea
Hear not, and speak what all these crying in one
Can speak not to the sun.
For in her sovereign eyelight all things are
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier star
That marries morn and even and winter and spring
With one love's golden ring.

For she can see the days of man, the birth
Of good, and death of evil things on earth
Inevitable and infinite, and sure
As present pain is, or herself is pure.
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all things
That lighten from before Time's thunderous wings
Through the awful circle of wheel-winged periods,
The tempest of the twilight of all gods;
And, higher than all the circling course they ran,
The sundawn of the spirit that was man.

And fear the song, too, taught him,—fear to be
Worthless the dear love of the wind and sea
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew reared
In rocks of man's foot feared,
Where naught of wingless life may sing or shine.
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven he had
When all the life in all his limbs was glad,
And all the drops in all his veins were wine,
And all the pulses music; when his heart,
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea bear part
In one live song's reiterance, and the bore:
Fear to go crownless of the flower he wore
When the winds loved him, and the waters knew
The blithest life that clove their blithe life through
With living limbs exultant, or held strife
More amorous than all dalliance ay anew
With the bright breath and strength of their large life,

With all strong wrath of all sheer winds that blew,
All glories of all storms of the air that fell
Prone, ineluctable,
With roar from heaven of revel, and with hue
As of a heaven turned hell.
For when the red blast of their breath had made
All heaven aflush with light more dire than shade,
He felt it in his blood and eyes and hair
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and air
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh, and stung
The soul behind it as with serpent's tongue,
Forked like the loveliest lightnings: nor could bear
But hardly, half distraught with strong delight,
The joy that like a garment wrapped him round,
And lapped him over and under
With raiment of great light,
And rapture of great sound
At every loud leap earthward of the thunder
From heaven's most furthest bound:
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in sight,
Alive and mad with glory and angry joy,
That something of its marvellous mirth and might
Moved even to madness, fledged as even for flight,
The blood and spirit of one but mortal boy.

So, clothed with love, and fear that love makes great,
And armed with hope and hate,
He set first foot upon the spring-flowered ways
That all feet pass and praise.
And one dim dawn between the winter and spring,
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven and earth
To put back April that had borne his birth
From sunward on her sunniest shower-struck wing,
With tears and laughter for the dew-dropt thing,
Slight as indeed a dewdrop, by the sea
One met him lovelier than all men may be,
God-featured, with god's eyes; and in their might
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar their sight,
Even of all eyes drawn toward him; and his mouth
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,
One rose of all the rose-beds in the world:
But round his brows the curls were snakes that curled,
And like his tongue a serpent's; and his voice
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.
Yet then he spake no word, seeming as dumb,
A dumb thing mild and hurtless; nor at first
From his bowed eyes seemed any light to come,
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to thirst:
But as one blind and mute in mild, sweet wise,
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and eyes,
He strayed with faint, bare, lily-lovely feet,
Helpless, and flower-like sweet:
Nor might man see, not having word hereof,
That this of all gods was the great god Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a little child
That well-nigh wept for wonder that it smiled,
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft speech
The youth bespake him softly; but there fell
From the sweet lips no sweet word audible
That ear or thought might reach;

No sound to make the dim cold silence glad,
No breath to thaw the hard harsh air with heat;
Only the saddest smile of all things sweet,
Only the sweetest smile of all things sad.

And so they went together one green way
Till April dying made free the world for May;
And on his guide suddenly Love's face turned,
And in his blind eyes burned
Hard light and heat of laughter; and like flame
That opens in a mountain's ravening mouth
To blear and sear the sunlight from the south,
His mute mouth opened, and his first word came:
"Knowest thou me now by name?"
And all his stature waxed immeasurable,
As of one shadowing heaven and lightening hell;
And statelier stood he than a tower that stands
And darkens with its darkness far-off sands
Whereon the sky leans red;
And with a voice that stilled the winds he said,—
"I am he that was thy lord before thy birth,
I am he that is thy lord till thou turn earth:
I make the night more dark, and all the morrow
Dark as the night whose darkness was my breath:
O fool, my name is Sorrow:
Thou fool, my name is Death."

And he that heard spake not, and looked right on
Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night, toward many a wearier day,
His spirit bore his body down its way
Through many a day, toward many a wearier night,
His soul sustained his sorrows in her sight.
And earth was bitter, and heaven, and even the sea,
Sorrowful even as he.
And the wind helped not, and the sun was dumb;
And with too long strong stress of grief to be,
His heart grew sear and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in autumn sank,
At star-dawn standing on a gray sea bank
He felt the wind fitfully shift and heave
As toward a stormier eve;
And all the wan wide sea shuddered and earth
Shook underfoot, as toward some timeless birth,
Intolerable and inevitable; and all
Heaven, darkling, trembled like a stricken thrall;
And far out of the quivering east, and far
From past the moonrise and its guiding star,
Began a noise of tempest, and a light
That was not of the lightning; and a sound
Rang with it round and round,
That was not of the thunder; and a flight
As of blown clouds by night,
That was not of them; and with song and cries
That sang and shrieked their soul out at the skies,
A shapeless earthly storm of shapes began
From all ways round to move in on the man,
Clamorous against him silent; and their feet
Were as the winds are fleet,
And their shrill songs were as wild birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth was wronged,
And all the host of all men driven afoam
By the red hand of Rome,
Round some fierce amphitheatre overthronged
With fair clear faces full of bloodier lust
Than swells and stings the tiger when his mood
Is fieriest after blood,
And drunk with trampling of the murderous must
That soaks and stains the tortuous close-coiled wood
Made monstrous with its myriad-mustering brood,
Face by fair face panted and gleamed and pressed,
And breast by passionate breast
Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as they quaffed
The red ripe full fume of the deep live draught,
The sharp quick reek of keen fresh bloodshed, blown
Through the dense deep drift up to the emperor's throne
From the under steaming sands,
With clamor of all-applausive throats and hands,
Mingling in mirthful time
With shrill, blithe mockeries of the lithe-limbed mime;
So from somewhence far forth of the unbeholden,
Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,
Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and golden,
With sound of chiming waves that drown the thunder,
Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,
Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,
Terrible; firs bowed down as briers or palms
Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze
Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and storms of psalms;
Red hands rent up the roots of old-world trees,
Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas
Made mad the moonless and infuriate air
That, ravening, revelled in the riotous hair
And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him; and his heart,
As out of sleep suddenly struck a-start,
Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs, and grief
Was as a last year's leaf
Blown dead far down the wind's way; and he set
His pale mouth to the brightest mouth it met
That laughed for love against his lips, and bade
Follow; and in following, all his blood grew glad
And as again a seabird's; for the wind
Took him to bathe him deep round breast and brow;
Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and thinned,
But as the brightest bay-flower blown on bough,
Set springing toward it singing: and they rode
By many a vine-leafed, many a rose-hung road,
Exalt with exaltation; many a night
Set all its stars upon them as for spies
On many a moon-bewildering mountain height
Where he rode only by the fierier light
Of his dread lady's hot, sweet hungering eyes.
For the moon wandered witless of her way,
Spell-stricken by strong magic in such wise
As wizards use to set the stars astray.
And in his ears the music that makes mad
Beat always; and what way them usic bade,
That alway rode he; nor was any sleep
His, nor from height nor deep.

But heaven was as red iron, slumberless,
And had no heart to bless;
And earth lay sear and darkling as distraught,
And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn and even,
His mother, passing forth of her fair heaven,
With goodlier gifts than all save gods can give
From earth or from the heaven where sea-things live,
With shine of sea-flowers through the bay-leaf braid
Woven for a crown her foam-white hands had made
To crown him with land's laurel and sea-dew,
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy: but he
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,
Riding the red ways of the revel through
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's crownless crew.
Till on some winter's dawn of some dim year
He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip
Slide, and the green rein slip,
And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave ear
If sound from landward hailed him, dire or dear;
And passing forth of all those fair fierce ranks
Back to the gray sea-banks,
Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the steep,
Fell after many sleepless dreams on sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light was shed
Heavily round his head
That through the vale of sea falls fathom-deep,
Blurred like a lamp's that when the night drops dead
Dies; and his eyes gat grace of sleep to see
The deep divine dark day-shine of t
sea,
Dense water-walls and clear dusk wate
ways,
Broad-based, or branching as a se
flower sprays
That side or this dividing; and anew
The glory of all her glories that
knew.
And in sharp rapture of recoveri
tears
He woke on fire with yearnings of o
years,
Pure as one purged of pain that pa
sion bore,
Ill child of bitter mother; for his ow
Looked laughing toward him from h
mid-sea throne,
Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great san
joy began,
Of child that made him man:
And, turned again from all hearts el
on quest,
He communed with his own heart, ar
had rest.
And like the sea-winds upon lo
waters ran
His days and dreams together, till t
joy
Burned in him of the boy;
Till the earth's great comfort and t
sweet sea's breath
Breathed and blew life in where w
heartless death, —
Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick day
where strife
Of thought and flesh made mock
death and life.
And grace returned upon him of h
birth
Where heaven was mixed with heave
like sea and earth;
And song shot forth strong wings th
took the sun
From inward, fledged with might
sorrow and mirth,
And father's fire made mortal in his so
Nor was not spirit of strength in bla
and breeze
To exalt again the sun's child and t
sea's;

'or, as wild mares in Thessaly grow great
Vith child of ravishing winds, that violate
'heir leaping length of limb with manes like fire,
nd eyes outburning heaven's
Vith fires more violent than the lightning levin's,
nd breath drained out and desperate of desire,
'ven so the spirit in him, when winds grew strong,
rew great with child of song.
'or less than when his veins first leapt for joy
'o draw delight in such as burns a boy,
'ow, too, the soul of all his senses felt
'he passionate pride of deep sea-pulses dealt
hrough nerve and jubilant vein
s from the love and largess of old time;
nd with his heart again
he tidal throb of all the tides keep rhyme,
nd charm him from his own soul's separate sense
'ith infinite and invasive influence,
hat made strength sweet in him, and sweetness strong,
eing now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day, when brighter sea-wind blew,
nd louder sea-shine lightened, for the waves
'ere full of godhead and the light that saves,
is father's and their spirit had pierced him through,
e felt strange breath and light all round him shed
iat bowed him down with rapture; and he knew
is father's hand, hallowing his humbled head,
id the old great voice of the old good time, that said:

"Child of my sunlight, and the sea, from birth
fosterling and fugitive on earth;
Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or fire,
A man-child with an ungrown god's desire;
Because thou hast loved not mortal more than me,
Thy father, and thy mother-hearted sea;
Because thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold
Life and life's love for song, God's living gold;
Because thou hast given thy flower and fire of youth
To feed men's hearts with visions truer than truth;
Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering eyes
The light that makes me music of the skies;
Because thou hast heard, with world-unwearied ears,
The music that puts light into the spheres, —
Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth
The sound of song that mingles north and south,
The song of all the winds that sing of me,
And in thy soul the sense of all the sea."

HERSE.

WHEN grace is given us ever to behold
A child some sweet months old,
Love, laying across our lips his finger, saith,
Smiling, with bated breath,
Hush! for the holiest thing that lives is here,
And heaven's own heart how near!
How dare we, that may gaze not on the sun,
Gaze on this verier one?
Heart, hold thy peace; eyes, be cast down for shame;
Lips, breathe not yet its name.
In heaven they know what name to call it: we,
How should we know? For, see!

The adorable sweet living marvellous
Strange light that lightens us
Who gaze, desertless of such glorious grace,
Full in a babe's warm face!
All roses that the morning rears are naught,
All stars not worth a thought,
Set this one star against them, or suppose
As rival this one rose.
What price could pay with earth's whole weight of gold
One least flushed roseleaf's fold
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that shine
From each warm curve and line,
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to re-illume
The dappled rose-red bloom
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,
That on the roses of the dawn have trod
As they came down from God,
And keep the flush and colour that the sky
Takes when the sun comes nigh,
And keep the likeness of the smile their grace
Evoked on God's own face
When, seeing this work of his most heavenly mood,
He saw that it was good?
For all its warm sweet body seems one smile,
And mere men's love too vile
To meet it, or with eyes that worship dims
Read o'er the little limbs,
Read all the book of all their beauties o'er,
Rejoice, revere, adore,
Bow down and worship each delight in turn,
Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.
But when our trembling kisses dare, yet dread,
Even to draw nigh its head,
And touch, and scarce with touch or breath surprise
Its mild miraculous eyes
Out of their viewless vision — O, wh
then,
What may be said of men?
What speech may name a new-bo
child? what word
Earth ever spake or heard?
The best men's tongue that ever gl
knew
Called that a drop of dew
Which from the breathing creatur
kindly womb
Came forth in blameless bloom.
We have no word, as had those m
most high,
To call a baby by.
Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of storml
seas —
A better word than these,
A better sign it was than flower
gem
That love revealed to them:
They knew that whence comes light
quickening flame,
Thence only this thing came,
And only might be likened of our lo
To somewhat born above,
Not even to sweetest things dropp
else on earth,
Only to dew's own birth.
Nor doubt we but their sense w
heavenly true,
Babe, when we gaze on you,
A dew-drop out of heaven, whose col
are
More bright than sun or star,
As now, ere watching love dare fear
hope,
Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,
And all your life is mixed with eart
leaven.
O child, what news from heaven?

EIGHT YEARS OLD.

I.

SUN, whom the faltering snow-cl
fears,
Rise, let the time of year be May,
Speak now the word that April hear
Let March have all his royal way

Bid all spring raise in winter's ears
All tunes her children hear or play,
Because the crown of eight glad years
On one bright head is set to-day.

II.

What matters cloud or sun to-day
To him who wears the wreath of years
So many, and all like flowers at play
With wind and sunshine, while his ears
Hear only song on every way?
More sweet than spring triumphant hears
Ring through the revel-rout of May
Are these, the notes that winter fears.

III.

Strong-hearted winter knows and fears
The music made of love at play,
Or haply loves the tune he hears
From hearts fulfilled with flowering May,
Whose molten music thaws his ears
Late frozen, deaf but yesterday
To sounds of dying and dawning years,
Now quickened on his deathward way.

IV.

For deathward now lies winter's way
Down the green vestibule of years
That each year brightens day by day
With flower and shower till hope scarce fears,
And fear grows wholly hope of May.
But we — the music in our ears
Made of love's pulses as they play,
The heart alone that makes it hears.

V.

The heart it is that plays and hears
High salutation of to-day.
Tongue falters, hand shrinks back, song fears
Its own unworthiness to play
Fit music for those eight sweet years,
Or sing their blithe accomplished way.
No song quite worth a young child's ears
Broke ever even from birds in May.

VI.

There beats not in the heart of May,
When summer hopes and springtide fears,
There falls not from the height of day,
When sunlight speaks and silence hears,
So sweet a psalm as children play
And sing, each hour of all their years,
Each moment of their lovely way,
And know not how it thrills our ears.

VII.

Ah! child, what are we, that our ears
Should hear you singing on your way,
Should have this happiness? The years
Whose hurrying wings about us play
Are not like yours, whose flower-time fears
Naught worse than sunlit showers in May,
Being sinless as the spring, that hears
Her own heart praise her every day.

VIII.

Yet we, too, triumph in the day
That bare, to entrance our eyes and ears,
To lighten daylight, and to play
Such notes as darkness knows and fears,
The child whose face illumes our way,
Whose voice lifts up the heart that hears,
Whose hand is as the hand of May
To bring us flowers from eight full years.

FEB. 4, 1882.

"NON DOLET."

IT does not hurt. She looked along the knife
Smiling, and watched the thick drops mix and run
Down the sheer blade: not that which had been done
Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman wife,

But that which was to do yet ere the strife
Could end for each forever, and the sun:
Nor was the palm yet nor was peace yet won
While pain had power upon her husband's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom: how shalt thou not take
The gift love's blood has reddened for thy sake?
Was not thy life-blood given for us before?
And if love's heart-blood can avail thy need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt indeed?

LINES ON THE DEATH OF EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY.

Last high star of the years whose thunder
Still men's listening remembrance hears,
Last light left of our fathers' years,
Watched with honour and hailed with wonder,
Thee too, then, have the years borne under,
Thou too, then, hast regained thy peers.
Wings that warred with the winds of morning,
Storm-winds rocking the red great dawn,
Close at last, and a film is drawn
Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorning
Now no longer the loud wind's warning,
Waves that threaten or waves that fawn.

Peers were none of thee left us living,
Peers of theirs we shall see no more.
Eight years over the full fourscore
Knew thee: now shalt thou sleep, f
giving
All griefs past of the wild world's g
ing,
Moored at last on the storml
shore.

World-wide liberty's lifelong lover,
Lover no less of the strength
song,
Sea-king, swordsman, hater of wro
Over thy dust that the dust shall co
Comes my song as a bird to hover,
Borne of its will as of wings along

Cherished of thee were this brief son
brothers
Now that follows them, cherish
thee.
Over the tides and the tideless sea
Soft as a smile of the earth
mother's,
Flies it faster than all those others,
First of the troop at thy tomb
be.

Memories of Greece, and the mountai
hollow
Guarded alone of thy loyal sword,
Hold thy name for our hearts
ward:
Yet more fain are our hearts to
low
One way now with the southward sw
low
Back to the grave of the man th
lord.

Heart of hearts, art thou moved
hearing
Surely, if hearts of the dead
hear,
Whose true heart it is now dra
near?
Surely the sense of it thrills thee, ch
ing
Darkness and death with the news
nearing, —
Shelley, Trelawny rejoins thee he

OFF SHORE.

When the might of the summer
Is most on the sea;
When the days overcome her
With joy but to be,
With rapture of royal enchantment, and
sorcery that sets her not free, —

But for hours upon hours
As a thrall she remains
Spell-bound as with flowers,
And content in their chains,
And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not
a lock of their deep white manes;

Then only, far under
In the depths of her hold,
Some gleam of its wonder
Man's eye may behold,
Its wild weed forests of crimson and
russet and olive and gold.

Still deeper and dimmer
And goodlier they glow
For the eyes of the swimmer
Who scans them below
As he crosses the zone of their flower-
age that knows not of sunshine
and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage
And foliage that gleams
As to prisoners in bondage
The light of their dreams,
The desire of a dawn unbeholden, with
hope on the wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed,
Waxen haggard and wizen,
But consoled and illumed
In the depths of their prison
With delight of the light everlasting,
and vision of dawn on them
risen, —

From the banks and the beds
Of the waters divine,
They lift up their heads,
And the flowers of them shine
Through the splendor of darkness that
clothes them, of water that glim-
mers like wine.

Bright bank over bank
Making glorious the gloom,
Soft rank upon rank,
Strange bloom after bloom,
They kindle the liquid low twilight, the
dusk of the dim sea's womb.

Through the subtile and tangible
Gloom without form,
Their branches, infrangible
Even of storm,
Spread softer their sprays than the
shoots of the woodland when
April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full
Charged with its word,
Dividing the wonderful
Depths like a bird,
Speaks wrath and delight to the heart
of the night that exults to have
heard, —

So swiftly, though soundless
In silence's ear,
Light, winged from the boundless
Blue depths full of cheer,
Speaks joy to the heart of the waters
that part not before him, but hear.

Light perfect and visible,
Godhead of God,
God indivisible,
Lifts but his rod,
And the shadows are scattered in sun-
der, and darkness is light at his
nod.

At the touch of his wand,
At the nod of his head
From the spaces beyond
Where the dawn hath her bed,
Earth, water, and air are transfigured,
and rise as one risen from the
dead.

He puts forth his hand,
And the mountains are thrilled
To the heart, as they stand
In his presence, fulfilled
With his glory that utters his grace
upon earth, and her sorrows are
stilled.

The moan of her travail
That groans for the light
Till dayspring unravel
The weft of the night,
At the sound of the strings of the music of morning, falls dumb with delight.

He gives forth his word,
And the word that he saith,
Ere well it be heard,
Strikes darkness to death;
For the thought of his heart is the sunrise, and dawn as the sound of his breath.

And the strength of its pulses,
That passion makes proud,
Confounds and convulses
The depths of the cloud
Of the darkness that heaven was ingirt with, divided and rent as a shroud,—

As the veil of the shrine
Of the temple of old,
When darkness divine
Over noonday was rolled;
So the heart of the night by the pulse of the light is convulsed and controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning
For glories withdrawn,
And the waves' mouths, moaning
All night for the dawn,
Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths of the singers on lea-side and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring
Of all these as one,
Desired and desiring
Till dawn's will be done,
Fills full with delight of them heaven till it burns as the heart of the sun;

Till the waves, too, inherit,
And waters take part
In the sense of the spirit
That breathes from his heart,
And are kindled with music, as fire when the lips of the morning part,—

With music unheard
In the light of her lips,
In the life-giving word
Of the dewfall that drips
On the grasses of earth, and the wi
that enkindles the wings of t
ships.

White glories of wings
As of seafaring birds,
That flock from the springs
Of the sunrise in herds,
With the wind for a herdsman, a
hasten or halt at the change
his words;

As the watchwords change,
When the wind's note shifts,
And the skies grow strange,
And the white squall drifts
Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing t
sea till the low cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word
Bidding pause, bidding haste,
When the ranks are stirred
And the lines displaced,
They scatter as wild swans, parti
adrift on the wan green waste.

At the hush of his word,
In a pause of his breath
When the waters have heard
His will that he saith,
They stand as a flock penned close
its fold for division of death.

As a flock by division
Of death to be thinned,
As the shades in a vision
Of spirits that sinned;
So glimmer their shrouds and th
sheetings as clouds on the stre
of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,
And the sea burns bright,
And the flight of them past
Is no more than the flight
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wi
poised and afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers,
In a festival way,
When hours after hours
Shed grace on the day,
White blossom-like butterflies hover
and gleam through the snows of
the spray.

Like snow-colored petals
Of blossoms that flee
From storm that unsettles
The flowers as the tree,
They flutter, a legion of flowers on the
wing, through the field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field
Where the foam-blossoms blow,
And the secrets are sealed
Of their harvest below,
They float in the path of the sunbeams,
as flakes or as blossoms of snow.

Till the sea's ways darken,
And the god, withdrawn,
Give ear not, or hearken
If prayer on him fawn,
And the sun's self seem but a shadow,
the noon as a ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather,
God, father of song,
Shew grace to me, Father
God, loved of me long,
That I lose not the light of thy face,
that my trust in thee work me
not wrong, —

While yet I make forward
With face toward thee,
Not turned yet in shoreward,
Be thine upon me;
Be thy light on my forehead, or ever I
turn it again from the sea.

As a kiss on my brow
Be the light of thy grace,
Be thy glance on me now
From the pride of thy place:
As the sign of a sire to a son, be the
light on my face of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden
Times hailed and adored.
And the sense of thy golden
Great harp's monochord
Was the joy in the soul of the singers
that hailed thee for master and
lord.

Fair father of all
In thy ways that have trod,
That have risen at thy call,
That have thrilled at thy nod,
Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun!
that we see to be God.

As my soul has been dutiful
Only to thee,
O God! most beautiful,
Lighten thou me,
As I swim through the dim long rollers,
with eyelids uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us,
All in accord,
Father and lord of us
Always adored,
The slayer, and the stayer, and the
harper, the light of us all, and
our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,
At the touch of thy rod,
Air quickens to fire
By the foot of thee trod,
The savior, and healer, and singer,
the living and visible God.

The years are before thee
As shadows of thee,
As men that adore thee,
As cloudlets that flee:
But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is
heaven, and thy shrine is the sea.

EVENING ON THE BROADS.

Over two shadowless waters, adrift as
a pinnace in peril,
Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged
with irresolute light,
Softly the soul of the sunset upholden
awhile on the sterile
Waves and wastes of the land, half
repossessed by the night.

Inland glimmer the shallows asleep, and afar in the breathless
Twilight: yonder the depths darken afar and asleep.
Slowly the semblance of death out of heaven descends on the deathless
Waters: hardly the light lives on the face of the deep,—
Hardly, but here for a while. All over the gray soft shallow
Hover the colors and clouds of the twilight, void of a star.
As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged night, whose winglets are callow
Yet, but soon with their plumes will she cover her brood from afar,—
Cover the brood of her worlds that cumber the skies with their blossom,
Thick as the darkness of leaf-shadowed spring is encumbered with flowers.
World upon world is enwound in the bountiful girth of her bosom,
Warm and lustrous with life lovely to look on as ours.
Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in doubt that dissembles
Still with itself, being sick of division, and dimmed by dismay—
Nay, not so; but with love and delight beyond passion it trembles,
Fearful and fain of the night, lovely with love of the day:
Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto death, and begotten
Out of the womb of the tomb, born of the seed of the grave:
Lovely with shadows of loves that are only not wholly forgotten,
Only not wholly suppressed by the dark, as a wreck by the wave.
Still there linger the loves of the morning and noon, in a vision
Blindly beheld, but in vain; ghosts that are tired, and would rest.
But the glories beloved of the night rise all too dense for division,
Deep in the depth of her breast sheltered as doves in a nest.
Fainter the beams of the loves of the daylight season enkindled
Wane, and the memories of hour that were fair with the love o them fade;
Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunse stricken and dwindled,
Gather the signs of the love at th heart of the night new-made.
New-made night, new-born of the sun set, immeasurable, endless,
Opens the secret of love hid from o old in her heart,—
In the deep sweet heart full-charge with faultless love of the friend less
Spirits of men that are eased whe the wheels of the sun depart.
Still is the sunset afloat as a ship o the waters upholden
Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softl forever a-sway—
Nay, not so, but at least for a little a while at the golden
Limit of arching air fain for an hou to delay.
Here on the bar of the sand-bank steep yet aslope to the gleamin
Waste of the water without, wast of the water within,
Lights overhead and lights underneat seen doubtfully dreaming
Whether the day be done, whethe the night may begin.
Far and afar and farther again, the falter and hover,
Warm on the water, and deep in th sky, and pale on the cloud:
Colder again, and slowly remoter, afrai to recover
Breath, yet fain to revive, as it seem from the skirt of the shroud.
Faintly the heart-beats shorten an pause of the light in the wes ward
Heaven, as eastward quicken th paces of star upon star
Hurried and eager of life as a chil that strains to the breast-ward
Eagerly, yearning forth of the deep where the ways of them are,
Glad of the glory of the gift of the life and the wealth of its wonde
Fain of the night, and the sea, an the sweet wan face of the earth

Over them air grows deeper, intense
with delight in them: under
Things are thrilled in their sleep, as
with sense of a sure new birth.
But here by the sand-bank watching,
with eyes on the sea-line, stranger
Grows to me also the weight of the
sea-ridge gazed on of me,
Heavily heaped up, changefully change-
less, void though of danger,
Void not of menace, but full of the
might of the dense dull sea.
Like as the wave is before me, behind
is the bank deep-drifted;
Yellow and thick as the bank is be-
hind me, in front is the wave.
As the wall of a prison imprisoning the
mere, is the girth of it lifted;
But the rampire of water in front is
erect as the wall of a grave.
And the crests of it crumble and topple
and change, but the wall is not
broken:
Standing still dry-shod, I see it as
higher than my head,
Moving inland alway again, reared up
as in token
Still of impending wrath still in the
foam of it shed.
And even in the pauses between them,
dividing the rollers in sunder,
High overhead seems ever the sea-
line fixed as a mark;
And the shore where I stand, as a val-
ley beholden of hills whence
thunder
Cloud and torrent and storm, dark-
ening the depths of the dark.
Up to the sea, not upon it or over it,
upward from under
Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn
after it here from the shore;
A wall of turbid water, a-slope to the
wide sky's wonder
Of color and cloud, it climbs, or
spreads as a slanted floor.
And the large lights change on the face
of the mere, like things that were
living,
Winged and wonderful, beams like
as birds are that pass and are free;
But the light is dense as darkness, a
gift withheld in the giving,
That lies as dead on the fierce dull
face of the landward sea.
Stained and stifled and soiled, made
earthlier than earth is and duller,
Grimly she puts back light as re-
jected, a thing put away:
No transparent rapture, a molten music
of color;
No translucent love taken and given
of the day.
Fettered and marred and begrimed, is
the light's live self on her falling,
As the light of a man's life lighted
the fume of a dungeon mars:
Only she knows of the wind, when her
wrath gives ear to him calling;
The delight of the light she knows
not, nor answers the sun or the
stars.
Love she hath none to return for the
luminous love of their giving:
None to reflect from the bitter and
shallow response of her heart.
Yearly she feeds on her dead, yet her-
self seems dead and not living,
Or confused as a soul heavy-laden
with trouble that will not depart.
In the sound of her speech to the dark-
ness the moan of her evil remorse
is,
Haply, for strong ships gnawed by
the dog-toothed sea-bank's fang,
And trampled to death by the rage of
the feet of her foam-lipped horses,
Whose manes are yellow as plague,
and as ensigns of pestilence hang,
That wave in the foul faint air of the
breath of a death-stricken city;
So menacing heaves she the manes of
her rollers knotted with sand,
Discolored, opaque, suspended in sign
as of strength without pity,
That shake with flameless thunder
the low long length of the strand.
Here, far off in the farther extreme of
the shore as it lengthens
Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever
a village begin,
On the lapsing land that recedes as
the growth of the strong sea
strengthens
Shoreward, thrusting further and fur-
ther its outworks in,

Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower
of her kin forsaken,
Lay in her golden raiment alone on
the wild wave's edge,
Surely by no shore else, but here on
the bank storm-shaken,
Perdita, bright as a dewdrop engilt
of the sun on the sedge.
Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes,
in a dream, he beheld her
Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a
far-off king;
And over the babe-flower gently the
head of a pastoral elder
Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the
hawthorn-blossom in spring,
And kind as harvest in autumn: a
shelter of shade on the lonely
Shelterless unknown shore, scourged
of implacable waves:
Here, where the wind walks royal,
alone in his kingdom, and only
Sounds to the sedges a wail as of
triumph that conquers and
craves.
All these waters and wastes are his
empire of old, and awaken
From barren and stagnant slumber
at only the sound of his breath:
Yet the hunger is eased not that aches
in his heart, nor the goal over-
taken
That his wide wings yearn for, and
labor as hearts that yearn after
death.
All the solitude sighs and expects with
a blind expectation
Somewhat unknown of its own sad
heart, grown heart-sick of strife:
Till sometime its wild heart maddens,
and moans, and the vast ululation
Takes wing with the clouds on the
waters, and wails to be quit of
its life.
For the spirit and soul of the waste is
the wind, and his wings with
their waving
Darken and lighten the darkness and
light of it thickened or thinned,
But the heart that impels them is even
as a conqueror's insatiably crav-
ing
That victory can fill not, as power ca
not satiate the want of the win
All these moorlands and marshes a
full of his might, and oppose n
Aught of defence nor of barrier,
forest or precipice piled;
But the will of the wind works ever
his that desires what he knov
not,
And the wail of his want unfulfilled
as one making moan for her chil
And the cry of his triumph is even
the crying of hunger that ma
dens
The heart of a strong man, aching
vain as the wind's heart aches;
And the sadness itself of the land f
its infinite solitude saddens
More for the sound than the silen
athirst for the sound that slake
And the sunset at last, and the twilig
are dead; and the darkness
breathless
With fear of the wind's breath ri
ing that seems and seems not
sleep;
But a sense of the sound of it alway,
spirit unsleeping and deathless
Ghost or god, evermore moves
the face of the deep.

THE EMPEROR'S PROGRESS

A STUDY IN THREE STAGES.

(On the Busts of Nero in the Uffizj.)

A CHILD of brighter than the morning
birth,
And lovelier than all smiles that m
be smiled
Save only of little children undefile
Sweet, perfect, witless of their ov
dear worth,
Live rose of love, mute melody
mirth,
Glad as a bird is when the woods a
mild,
Adorable as is nothing save a child
Hails with wide eyes and lips his li
on earth,

His lovely life with all its heaven to be.
And whoso reads the name inscribed, or hears,
Feels his own heart a frozen well of tears,
Child, for deep dread and fearful pity of thee
Whom God would not let rather die than see
The incumbent horror of impending years.

II.

Man, that wast godlike being a child, and now,
No less than kinglike, art no more in sooth
For all thy grace and lordliness of youth,
The crown that bids men's branded foreheads bow,
Much more has branded and bowed down thy brow,
And gnawn upon it as with fire or tooth
Of steel or snake so sorely, that the truth
Seems here to bear false witness. Is it thou,
Child? and is all the summer of all thy spring
This? are the smiles that drew men's kisses down
All faded and transfigured to the frown
That grieves thy face? Art thou this weary thing?
Then is no slave's load heavier than a crown,
And such a thrall no bondman as a king.

III.

Misery beyond all men's most miserable,
Absolute, whole, defiant of defence,
Inevitable, inexplacable, intense,
More vast than heaven is high, more deep than hell,
Past cure or charm of solace or of spell,
Possesses and pervades the spirit and sense
Whereto the expanse of the earth pays tribute; whence
Breeds evil only, and broods on fumes that swell
Rank from the blood of brother and mother and wife.
"Misery of miseries, all is misery," saith
The heavy fair-faced hateful head, at strife
With its own lusts that burn with feverous breath,
Lips which the loathsome bitterness of life
Leaves fearful of the bitterness of death.

SIX YEARS OLD.

To H. W. M.

BETWEEN the springs of six and seven,
Two fresh years' fountains, clear
Of all but golden sand for leaven,
Child, midway passing here,
As earth for love's sake dares bless heaven,
So dare I bless you, dear.

Between two bright well-heads, that brighten
With every breath that blows
Too loud to lull, too low to frighten,
But fain to rock, the rose,
Your feet stand fast, your lit smiles lighten,
That might rear flowers from snows.

You came when winds unleashed were snarling
Behind the frost-bound hours,
A snow-bird sturdier than the starling,
A storm-bird fledged for showers,
That spring might smile to find you, darling,
First-born of all the flowers.

Could love make worthy things of worthless,
My song were worth an ear:
Its note should make the days most mirthless
The merriest of the year,
And wake to birth all buds yet birthless,
To keep your birthday, dear.

But where your birthday brightens heaven
No need has earth, God knows,
Of light or warmth to melt or leaven
The frost or fog that glows
With sevenfold heavenly lights of seven
Sweet springs that cleave the snows.

Could love make worthy music of you,
And match my Master's powers,
Had even my love less heart to love you,
A better song were ours;
With all the rhymes like stars above you,
And all the words like flowers.

SEPT. 30, 1880.

A PARTING SONG.

(To a friend leaving England for a year's residence in Australia.)

THESE winds and suns of spring,
That warm with breath and wing
The trembling sleep of earth, till half awake
She laughes and blushes ere her slumber break,
For all good gifts they bring
Require one better thing,
For all the loans of joy they lend us, borrow
One sharper dole of sorrow,
To sunder soon by half a world of sea
Her son from England, and my friend from me.

Nor hope nor love nor fear
May speed or stay one year,
Nor song nor prayer may bid, as mi would fain.
The seasons perish and be born agai
Restoring all we lend,
Reluctant, of a friend,—
The voice, the hand, the presence, a the sight,
That lend their life and light
To present gladness and heart-streng ening cheer,
Now lent again for one reluctant yea

So much we lend indeed,
Perforce, by force of need,
So much we must; even these thin and no more,
The far sea sundering and the sunder shore
A world apart from ours,
So much the imperious hours;
Exact, and spare not; but no mo than these
All earth and all her seas
From thought and faith of trust a truth can borrow,
Not memory from desire, nor ho from sorrow.

Through bright and dark and brig
Returns of day and night
I bid the swift year speed, and chan and give
His breath of life to make the n year live
With sunnier suns for us,
A life more prosperous,
And laugh with flowers more fragra that shall see
A merrier March for me,
A rosier-girdled race of night w day,
A goodlier April, and a tenderer Ma

For him the inverted year
Shall mark our seasons here
With alien alternation, and revive
This withered winter, slaying the spr alive
With darts more sharply drawn
As nearer draws the dawn,
In heaven transfigured over earth tra formed,
And with our winters warmed

And wasted with our summers, till the beams
Rise on his face that rose on Dante's dreams.

Till fourfold morning rise
Of star-shine on his eyes,
Dawn of the spheres that brand steep heaven across
At height of night with semblance of a cross
Whose grace and ghostly glory
Poured heaven on purgatory,
Seeing with their flamelets risen all heaven grow glad
For love thereof it had
And lovely joy of loving; so may these
Make bright with welcome now their southern seas.

O happy stars, whose mirth
The saddest soul on earth
That ever soared and sang, found strong to bless,
Lightening his life's harsh load of heaviness
With comfort sown like seed
In dreams though not in deed,
On sprinkled wastes of darkling thought divine!
Let all your lights now shine
With all as glorious gladness on his eyes
For whom indeed, and not in dream, they rise.

As those great twins of air
Hailed once with old-world prayer
Of all folk alway faring forth by sea,
So now may these for grace and guidance be,
To guard his sail, and bring
Again to brighten spring
The face we look for, and the hand we lack
Still, till they light him back,
As welcome as to first discovering eyes
Their light rose ever, soon on his to rise.

As parting now he goes
From snow-time back to snows,
So back to spring from summer may next year
Restore him, and our hearts receive him here,—
The best good gift that spring
Had ever grace to bring
At fortune's happiest hour of star-blest birth,
Back to love's home-bright earth,
To eyes with eyes that commune, hand with hand,
And the old warm bosom of all our mother-land.

Earth and sea-wind and sea
And stars and sunlight be
Alike all prosperous for him, and all hours
Have all one heart, and all that heart as ours.
All things as good as strange,
Crown all the seasons' change
With changing flower and compensating fruit
From one year's ripening root;
Till next year bring us, roused at spring's recall,
A heartier flower and goodlier fruit than all.

MARCH 26, 1880.

BY THE NORTH SEA.

I.

1.

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew in,
Wan waste where the winds lack breath;
Waste endless and boundless, and flowerless
But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as free;
Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless
To strive with the sea.

2.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
Far flutters the weft of the grass
Spun dense over desolate hollows,
More pale than the clouds as they pass;
Thick woven as the web of a witch is
Round the heart of a thrall that hath sinned,
Whose youth and the wrecks of its riches
Are waifs on the wind.

3.

The pastures are herdless and sheepless,
No pasture or shelter for herds:
The wind is relentless and sleepless,
And restless and songless the birds;
Their cries from afar fall breathless,
Their wings are as lightnings that flee;
For the land has two lords that are deathless, —
Death's self, and the sea.

4.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,
Hold converse of desolate speech;
And her waters are haggard and yellow
And crass with the scurf of the beach;
And his garments are gray as the hoary
Wan sky where the day lies dim;
And his power is to her, and his glory,
As hers unto him.

5.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,
In her glory he glows and is glad:
In her darkness the sound of his voice is,
With his breath she dilates, and is mad:
"If thou slay me, O death, and outlive me,
Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of thee."
"Shall I give thee not back if thou give me,
O sister, O sea?"

6.

And year upon year dawns living,
And age upon age drops dead:
And his hand is not weary of giving,
And the thirst of her heart is n
fed:
And the hunger that moans in her pa
sion,
And the rage in her hunger th
roars,
As a wolf's that the winter lays lash o
Still calls and implores.

7.

Her walls have no granite for girder,
No fortalice fronting her stands;
But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murde
Are less than the banks of her sand
These number their slain by the tho
sand;
For the ship hath no surety to be,
When the bank is abreast of her bow
and
Aflush with the sea.

8.

No surety to stand, and no shelter
To dawn out of darkness but one,
Out of waters that hurtle and welter,
No succor to dawn with the sun
But a rest from the wind as it passes,
Where, hardly redeemed from t
waves,
Lie thick as the blades of the grasses
The dead in their graves.

9.

A multitude noteless of numbers,
As wild weeds cast on an heap·
And sounder than sleep are their slu
bers,
And softer than song is their sleep
And sweeter than all things, and stra
ger
The sense, if perchance it may be,
That the wind is divested of danger,
And scatheless the sea;

10.

That the roar of the banks they breast
Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,

And the strength of his wings that invested
The wind, as the strength of a bird's:
As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's
That cry to him back if he cries,
As over the graves and their hollows
Days darken and rise.

11.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened
And clean of the sins that they sinned,
With a lovelier than man's life guerdoned,
And delight as a wave's in the wind,
And delight as the wind's in the billow,
Birds pass, and deride with their glee
The flesh that has dust for its pillow
As wrecks have the sea.

12.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,
Wings flash through the dusk like beams;
As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,
The bird in the graveyard gleams;
As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens
When the clarions of sunrise are heard,
The graves that the bird's note brightens
Grow bright for the bird.

13.

As the waves of the numberless waters
That the wind cannot number who guides,
Are the sons of the shore and the daughters
Here lulled by the chime of the tides;
And here in the press of them standing
We know not if these or if we
Live truliest, — or anchored to landing,
Or drifted to sea.

14.

In the valley he named of decision,
No denser were multitudes met
When the soul of the seer in her vision
Saw nations for doom of them set;
Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendor
Of judgment, the sword and the rod:
But the doom here of death is more tender,
And gentler the god.

15.

And gentler the wind from the dreary
Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,
Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,
From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped;
And sweeter than all that we call so
The seal of their slumber shall be
Till the graves that embosom them also
Be sapped of the sea.

II.

1.

For the heart of the waters is cruel,
And the kisses are dire of their lips,
And their waves are as fire is to fuel
To the strength of the seafaring ships,
Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel
To the sun's eye back as he dips.

2.

Though the sun's eye flash to the sea's
Live light of delight and of laughter,
And her lips breathe back to the breeze
The kiss that the wind's lips waft her
From the sun that subsides, and sees
No gleam of the storm's dawn after.

3.

And the wastes of the wild sea-marches
Where the borderers are matched in their might —
Bleak fens that the sun's weight parches,
Dense waves that reject his light —
Change under the change-colored arches
Of changeless morning and night.

4.

The waves are as ranks enrolled
Too close for the storm to sever:
The fens lie naked and cold,
But their heart fails utterly never:
The lists are set from of old,
And the warfare endureth forever.

III.

1.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation!
Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change!
Sign or token of some eldest nation
Here would make the strange land not so strange.
Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,
Seem these borders where the seabirds range.

2.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder
Grows his heart who journeys here alone:
Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under
Deep as deep in water sinks a stone;
Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,
Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

3.

Tall the plumage of the rush-flower tosses;
Sharp and soft in many a curve and line,
Gleam and glow the sea-colored marsh-mosses,
Salt and splendid from the circling brine;
Streak on streak of glimmering sea-shine crosses
All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

4.

Far, and far between, in divers orders
Clear gray steeples cleave the lo
gray sky;
Fast and firm as time-unshaken war
ers,
Hearts made sure by faith, by ho
made high.
These alone in all the wild sea-borde
Fear no blast of days and nights th
die.

5.

All the land is like as one man's fa
is,
Pale and troubled still with chan
of cares.
Doubt and death pervade her cloud
spaces;
Strength and length of life and pea
are theirs, —
Theirs alone amid these weary places
Seeing not how the wild world fre
and fares.

6.

Firm and fast where all is cloud th
changes,
Cloud-clogged sunlight, cloud by su
light thinned,
Stern and sweet, above the sand-h
ranges
Watch the towers and tombs of m
that sinned
Once, now calm as earth, whose on
change is
Wind, and light, and wind, and clou
and wind.

7.

Out and in and out the sharp stra
wander,
In and out and in the wild w
strives,
Starred and paved and lined wi
flowers that squander
Gold as golden as the gold of hive
Salt and moist and multiform; b
yonder,
See, what sign of life or death s
vives?

8.

Seen then only when the songs of olden
Harps were young, whose echoes yet endure,
Hymned of Homer when his years were golden,
Known of only when the world was pure,
Here is Hades, manifest, beholden,
Surely, surely here, if aught be sure!

9.

Where the border-line was crossed, that, sundering
Death from life, keeps weariness from rest,
None can tell, who fares here forward wondering;
None may doubt but here might end his quest.
Here life's lightning joys and woes once thundering
Sea-like round him cease like storm suppressed.

10.

Here the wise wave-wandering stead-fast-hearted
Guest of many a lord, of many a land,
Saw the shape or shade of years de-parted,
Saw the semblance risen and hard at hand,
Saw the mother long from love's reach parted,
Anticleia, like a statue stand.

11.

Statue? nay, nor tissued image woven
Fair on hangings in his father's hall;
Nay, too fast her faith of heart was proven,
Far too firm her loveliest love of all;
Love wherethrough the loving heart was cloven,
Love that hears not when the loud Fates call.

12.

Love that lives and stands up re-created
Then when life has ebbed and anguish fled;
Love more strong than death or all things fated,
Child's and mother's, lit by love and led;
Love that found what life so long awaited
Here, when life came down among the dead.

13.

Here, where never came alive another,
Came her son across the sundering tide
Crossed before by many a warrior brother
Once that warred on Ilion at his side;
Here spread forth vain hands to clasp the mother
Dead, that sorrowing for his love's sake died.

14.

Parted, though by narrowest of divisions,
Clasp he might not, only might implore,
Sundered yet by bitterest of derisions,
Son, and mother from the son she bore —
Here? But all dispeopled here of visions
Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the shore.

15.

All too sweet such men's Hellenic speech is,
All too fain they lived of light to see,
Once to see the darkness of these beaches,
Once to sing this Hades found of me,
Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and reaches,
Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste, and sea.

IV.

1.

But aloft and afront of me faring
Far forward as folk in a dream
That strive, between doubting and daring,
Right on till the goal for them gleam,
Full forth till their goal on them lighten,
The harbor where fain they would be,
What headlands there darken and brighten?
What change in the sea?

2.

What houses and woodlands that nestle
Safe inland to lee of the hill
As it slopes from the headlands that wrestle
And succumb to the strong sea's will?
Truce is not, nor respite, nor pity;
For the battle is waged not of hands,
Where over the grave of a city
The ghost of it stands.

3.

Where the wings of the sea-wind slacken,
Green lawns to the landward thrive,
Fields brighten and pine-woods blacken,
And the heat in their heart is alive;
They blossom and warble and murmur,
For the sense of their spirit is free:
But harder to shoreward and firmer
The grasp of the sea.

4.

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,
The banks drop down into dust,
The heights of the hills are made humble,
As a reed's is the strength of their trust;
As a city's that armies environ,
The strength of their stay is of sand
But the grasp of the sea is as iron,
Laid hard on the land.

5.

A land that is thirstier than ruin;
A sea that is hungrier than death;
Heaped hills that a tree never grew in
Wide sands where the wave draws breath;
All solace is here for the spirit
That ever forever may be
For the soul of thy son to inherit,
My mother, my sea.

6.

O delight of the headlands and beaches
O desire of the wind on the wold,
More glad than a man's when it reaches
That end which it sought from old,
And the palm of possession is dreary
To the sense that in search of sinned;
But nor satisfied ever nor weary
Is ever the wind.

7.

The delight that he takes but in living
Is more than of all things that live
For the world that has all things for giving
Has nothing so goodly to give:
But more than delight his desire is,
For the goal where his pinions would be
Is immortal as air or as fire is,
Immense as the sea.

8.

Though hence come the moan that borrows
From darkness and depths of night,
Though hence be the spring of sorrows,
Hence too is the joy of his might,
The delight that his doom is forever
To seek, and desire, and rejoice,
And the sense that eternity never
Shall silence his voice;

9.

That satiety never may stifle,
Nor weariness ever estrange,
Nor time be so strong as to rifle,
Nor change be so great as to change
His gift that renews in the giving,
The joy that exalts him to be
Alone of all elements living
The lord of the sea.

10.

What is fire, that its flame should consume her?
More fierce than all fires are her waves.
What is earth, that its gulfs should entomb her?
More deep are her own than their graves.
Life shrinks from his pinions that cover
The darkness by thunders bedinned;
But she knows him, her lord and her lover,
The godhead of wind.

11.

For a season his wings are about her,
His breath on her lips for a space;
Such rapture he wins not without her
In the width of his world-wide race.
Though the forests bow down, and the mountains
Wax dark, and the tribes of them flee,
His delight is more deep in the fountains
And springs of the sea.

12.

There are those too of mortals that love him,
There are souls that desire and require,
Be the glories of midnight above him,
Or beneath him the daysprings of fire;
And their hearts are as harps that approve him
And praise him as chords of a lyre
That were fain with their music to move him
To meet their desire.

13.

To descend through the darkness to grace them,
Till darkness were lovelier than light:
To encompass and grasp and embrace them,
Till their weakness were one with his might;
With the strength of his wings to caress them,
With the blast of his breath to set free;
With the mouths of his thunders to bless them
For sons of the sea.

14.

For these have the toil and the guerdon
That the wind has eternally: these
Have part in the boon and the burden
Of the sleepless, unsatisfied breeze,
That finds not, but seeking rejoices
That possession can work him no wrong;
And the voice at the heart of their voice is
The sense of his song.

15.

For the wind's is their doom and their blessing;
To desire, and have always above
A possession beyond their possessing,
A love beyond reach of their love.
Green earth has her sons and her daughters,
And these have their guerdons; but we
Are the wind's, and the sun's, and the water's,
Elect of the sea.

V.

1.

For the sea too seeks and rejoices,
Gains and loses and gains,
And the joy of her heart's own choice is
As ours, and as ours are her pains:

As the thoughts of our hearts are her voices,
And as hers is the pulse of our veins.

2.

Her fields that know not of dearth,
Nor lie for their fruit's sake fallow,
Laugh large in the depth of their mirth;
But inshore here in the shallow,
Embroiled with encumbrance of earth,
Their skirts are turbid and yellow.

3.

The grime of her greed is upon her,
The sign of her deed is her soil;
As the earth's is her own dishonor,
And corruption the crown of her toil:
She hath spoiled and devoured, and her honour
Is this, to be shamed by her spoil.

4.

But afar where pollution is none,
Nor ensign of strife nor endeavor,
Where her heart and the sun's are one,
And the soil of her sin comes never,
She is pure as the wind and the sun,
And her sweetness endureth forever.

VI.

1.

Death, and change, and darkness everlasting,
Deaf that hears not what the day-star saith,
Blind past all remembrance and forecasting,
Dead past memory that it once drew breath, —
These, above the washing tides and wasting,
Reign, and rule this land of utter death.

2.

Change of change, darkness of darkness, hidden,
Very death of very death, begun
When none knows, — the knowledge is forbidden, —
Self-begotten, self-proceeding, one
Born, not made — abhorred, unchained unchidden,
Night stands here defiant of the sun

3.

Change of change, and death of death begotten,
Darkness born of darkness, one and three,
Ghostly godhead of a world forgotten,
Crowned with heaven, enthroned on land and sea,
Here, where earth with dead men's bones is rotten,
God of Time, thy likeness worships thee.

4.

Lo! thy likeness of thy desolation,
Shape and figure of thy might, O Lord,
Formless form, incarnate miscreation
Served of all things living, and abhorred;
Earth herself is here thine incarnation
Time, of all things born on earth adored.

5.

All that worship thee are fearful of thee;
No man may not worship thee for fear:
Prayers nor curses prove not nor disprove thee,
Move nor change thee with our change of cheer:
All at last, though all abhorred thee love thee,
God, the sceptre of whose throne is here.

6

Here thy throne and sceptre of thy station,
Here the palace paven for thy feet;
Here thy sign from nation unto nation
Passed as watchword for thy guard to greet, —
Guards that go before thine exaltation,
Ages, clothed with bitter years and sweet.

7.

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills his ditty,
Flickering flame-wise through the clear live calm,
Rose triumphal, crowning all a city,
Roofs exalted once with prayer and psalm,
Built of holy hands for holy pity,
Frank and fruitful as a sheltering palm.

8.

Church and hospice wrought in faultless fashion,
Hall and chancel bounteous and sublime,
Wide and sweet and glorious as compassion,
Filled and thrilled with force of choral chime,
Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled with passion,
Hailed a god more merciful than Time.

9.

Ah! less mighty, less than Time prevailing,
Shrunk, expelled, made nothing at his nod,
Less than clouds across the sea-line sailing,
Lies he, stricken by his master's rod.
"Where is man?" the cloister murmurs wailing;
Back the mute shrine thunders — "Where is God?"

10.

Here is all the end of all his glory, —
Dust, and grass, and barren silent stones.
Dead, like him, one hollow tower and hoary
Naked in the sea-wind stands and moans,
Filled and thrilled with its perpetual story:
Here, where earth is dense with dead men's bones.

11.

Low and loud and long, a voice forever,
Sounds the wind's clear story like a song.
Tomb from tomb the waves devouring sever,
Dust from dust as years relapse along;
Graves where men made sure to rest, and never
Lie dismantled by the seasons' wrong.

12.

Now displaced, devoured and desecrated,
Now by Time's hands darkly disinterred,
These poor dead that sleeping here awaited
Long the archangel's re-creating word,
Closed about with roofs and walls high-gated
Till the blast of judgment should be heard.

13.

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecration,
Corpse and coffin, yea, the very graves,
Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from their station,
Spurned and scourged of wind and sea like slaves,
Desolate beyond man's desolation,
Shrink and sink into the waste of waves.

14.

Tombs, with bare white piteous bones protruded,
Shroudless, down the loose collapsing banks,
Crumble, from their constant place detruded,
That the sea devours and gives not thanks.
Graves where hope and prayer and sorrow brooded
Gape and slide and perish, ranks on ranks.

15.

Rows on rows, and line by line they crumble,—
They that thought for all time through to be.
Scarce a stone whereon a child might stumble,
Breaks the grim field paced alone of me.
Earth, and man, and all their gods wax humble,
Here, where Time brings pasture to the sea.

VII.

1.

But afar on the headland exalted,
But beyond in the curl of the bay,
From the depth of his dome deep-vaulted,
Our father is lord of the day.
Our father and lord that we follow,
For deathless and ageless is he;
And his robe is the whole sky's hollow,
His sandal the sea.

2.

Where the horn of the headland is sharper,
And her green floor glitters with fire,
The sea has the sun for a harper,
The sun has the sea for a lyre.
The waves are a pavement of amber,
By the feet of the sea-winds trod,
To receive in a god's presence-chamber
Our father, the god.

3.

Time, haggard and changeful and hoary,
Is master and god of the land:
But the air is fulfilled of the glory
That is shed from our lord's right hand.
O father of all of us ever,
All glory be only to thee
From heaven, that is void of th
never,
And earth, and the sea.

4.

O Sun! whereof all is beholden,
Behold now the shadow of this dea
This place of the sepulchres, olden
And emptied and vain as a breath,
The bloom of the bountiful heather
Laughs broadly beyond in thy ligh
As dawn, with her glories to gather,
At darkness and night.

5.

Though the gods of the night lie r
ten,
And their honor be taken away,
And the noise of their names forgott
Thou, Lord, art god of the day.
Thou art father, and saviour, and spi
O Sun, of the soul that is free,
And hath grace of thy grace to inhe
Thine earth and thy sea.

6.

The hills and the sands and the beach
The waters adrift and afar,
The banks and the creeks and t
reaches,
How glad of thee all these are!
The flowers, overflowing, overcrowd
Are drunk with the mad win
mirth:
The delight of thy coming uncloude
Makes music of earth.

7.

I, last least voice of her voices,
Give thanks that were mute in
long
To the soul in my soul that rejoices
For the song that is over my song
Time gives what he gains for the g
ing,
Or takes for his tribute of me;
My dreams to the wind ever-living,
My song to the sea.

SONNETS.

TO WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE larks are loud above our leagues of whin,
Now the sun's perfume fills their glorious gold
With odor like the color · all the wold
Is only light and song and wind wherein
These twain are blent in one with shining din.
And now your gift, a giver's kingly-souled,
Dear old fast friend whose honors grow not old,
Bids memory's note as loud and sweet begin.
Though all but we from life be now gone forth
Of that bright household in our joyous north
Where I, scarce clear of boyhood just at end,
First met your hand; yet under life's clear dome
Now seventy strenuous years have crowned my friend,
Shines no less bright his full-sheaved harvest-home.

APRIL 20, 1882.

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT.

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with wonder:
The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might
Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night in sunder,
Searching if light or no light were thereunder,
And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep desire
Shone sole and stern before her and above
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet, —
The light of little children, and their love.

AFTER LOOKING INTO CARLYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

I.

THREE men lived yet when this dead man was young,
Whose names and words endure forever: one
Whose eyes grew dim with straining toward the sun,
And his wings weakened, and his angel's tongue
Lost half the sweetest song was ever sung,
But like the strain half uttered, earth hears none,
Nor shall man hear till all men's songs are done;
One whose clear spirit like an eagle hung

Between the mountains hallowed by his
his love
And the sky stainless as his soul above;
And one, the sweetest heart that ever
spake
The brightest words wherein sweet wis-
dom smiled.
These deathless names by this dead
snake defiled
Bid memory spit upon him for their
sake.

II.

Sweet heart, forgive me for thine own
sweet sake,
Whose kind blithe soul such seas of
sorrow swam,
And for my love's sake, powerless as
I am
For love to praise thee, or like thee to
make
Music of mirth where hearts less pure
would break,
Less pure than thine, our life-un-
spotted Lamb.
Things hatefullest thou hadst not
heart to damn,
Nor wouldst have set thine heel on this
dead snake.
Let worms consume its memory with
its tongue,
The fang that stabbed fair Truth, the
lip that stung
Men's memories uncorroded with its
breath.
Forgive me, that with bitter words like
his
I mix the gentlest English name that is,
The tenderest held of all that know
not death.

A LAST LOOK.

Sick of self-love, Malvolio, like an
owl
That hoots the sun re-risen where
starlight sank,
With German garters crossed athwart
thy frank
Stout Scottish legs, men watched thee
snarl and scowl,
And boys responsive with reverberate
howl
Shrilled, hearing how to thee the
springtime stank,
And as thine own soul all the world
smelt rank,
And as thine own thoughts Liberty
seemed foul.
Now, for all ill thoughts nursed and ill
words given
Not all condemned, not utterly for-
given,
Son of the storm and darkness, pass
in peace.
Peace upon earth thou knewest not
now, being dead,
Rest, with nor curse nor blessing on
thine head,
Where high-strung hate and strenu-
ous envy cease.

DICKENS.

Chief in thy generation born of men
Whom English praise acclaimed as
English-born,
With eyes that matched the world
wide eyes of morn
For gleam of tears or laughter, tender-
est then
When thoughts of children warmed
their light, or when
Reverence of age with love and
labour worn,
Or godlike pity fired with godlike
scorn,
Shot through them flame that winged
thy swift live pen:
Where stars and suns that we behold
not burn,
Higher even than here, though high-
est was here thy place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and
speak and shine
With Shakespeare, and the soft bright
soul of Sterne,
And Fielding's kindliest might, and
Goldsmith's grace;
Scarce one more loved or worthier
love than thine.

ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF DRAMATIC POETS.

I.

If all the flowers of all the fields on earth
By wonder-working summer were made one,
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the sun,
Its treasure-house of leaves were not more worth
Than those wherefrom thy light of musing mirth
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pen would run
Breathed life, and all its breath was benison.
Beloved beyond all names of English birth,
More dear than mightier memories! gentlest name
That ever clothed itself with flower-sweet fame,
Or linked itself with loftiest names of old
By right and might of loving; I, that am
Less than the least of those within thy fold,
Give only thanks for them to thee, Charles Lamb.

II.

So many a year had borne its own bright bees
And slain them since thy honey-bees were hived,
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet verse contrived
So well with craft of moulding melodies,
Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields at ease
Thought not to hear the sound on earth revived
Of summer music from the spring derived
When thy song sucked the flower of flowering trees.
But thine was not the chance of every day:
Time, after many a darkling hour, grew sunny,
And light between the clouds ere sunset swam,
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all away,
When, touched and tasted and approved, thy honey
Took subtler sweetness from the lips of Lamb.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

Crowned, girdled, garbed, and shod with light and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that are,
And all the starry songs behind thy car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim thee sire.

"If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,"
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory — Nay, not then,
Not yet mightst thou be praised enough of men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Not if men's tongues and angels' all in one
Spake, might the word be said that might speak Thee.
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields, mountains, yea, the sea,
What power is in them all to praise the sun?

His praise is this, — he can be praised of none.
Man, woman, child, praise God for him; but he
Exults not to be worshipped, but to be.
He is; and, being, beholds his work well done.
All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength, all mirth,
Are his: without him, day were night on earth.
Time knows not his from time's own period.
All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes, all lyres,
Fall dumb before him ere one string suspires.
All stars are angels; but the sun is God.

BEN JONSON.

BROAD-BASED, broad-fronted, bounteous, multiform,
With many a valley impleached with ivy and vine,
Wherein the springs of all the streams run wine,
And many a crag full-faced against the storm,
The mountain where thy Muse's feet made warm
Those lawns that revelled with her dance divine,
Shines yet with fire as it was wont to shine
From tossing torches round the dance a-swarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray grave heights,
High-thoughted seers with heaven's heart-kindling lights
Hold converse: and the herd of meaner things
Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft
When wrath on thy broad brows has risen, and laughed,
Darkening thy soul with shadow of thunderous wings.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN hour ere sudden sunset fired the west,
Arose two stars upon the pale deep east.
The hall of heaven was clear for night's high feast,
Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest.
Love leapt up from his mother's burning breast
To see those warm twin lights, as day decreased,
Wax wider, till, when all the sun had ceased,
As suns they shone from evening's kindled crest.
Across them and between, a quickening fire,
Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased desire.
Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the gleam of tears,
Filled half the hollow shell 'twixt heaven and earth
With sound like moonlight, mingling moan and mirth,
Which rings and glitters down the darkling years.

PHILIP MASSINGER.

CLOUDS here and there arisen an hour past noon
Checkered our English heaven with lengthening bars
And shadow and sound of wheel-winged thunder-cars
Assembling strength to put forth tempest soon,
When the clear still warm concord of thy tune
Rose under skies unscared by reddening Mars,
Yet, like a sound of silver speech of stars,
With full mild flame as of the mellowing moon.
Grave and great-hearted Massinger, thy face
High melancholy lights with loftier grace

Than gilds the brows of revel: sad and wise,
The spirit of thought that moved thy deeper song,
Sorrow serene in soft calm scorn of wrong,
Speaks patience yet from thy majestic eyes.

JOHN FORD.

HEW hard the marble from the mountain's heart
Where hardest night holds fast in iron gloom
Gems brighter than an April dawn in bloom,
That his Memnonian likeness thence may start
Revealed, whose hand with high funereal art
Carved night, and chiselled shadow: be the tomb
That speaks him famous graven with signs of doom,
Intrenched inevitably in lines athwart,
As on some thunder-blasted Titan's brow
His record of rebellion. Not the day
Shall strike forth music from so stern a chord,
Touching this marble: darkness, none knows how,
And stars impenetrable of midnight, may.
So looms the likeness of thy soul, John Ford.

JOHN WEBSTER.

THUNDER: the flesh quails, and the soul bows down.
Night: east, west, south, and northward, very night.
Star upon struggling star strives into sight,
Star after shuddering star the deep storms drown.
The very throne of night, her very crown,
A man lays hand on, and usurps her right.
Song from the highest of heaven's imperious height
Shoots, as a fire to smite some towering town.
Rage, anguish, harrowing fear, heart-crazing crime,
Make monstrous all the murderous face of Time
Shown in the spheral orbit of a glass
Revolving. Earth cries out from all her graves.
Frail, on frail rafts, across wide-wallowing waves,
Shapes here and there of child and mother pass.

THOMAS DECKER.

OUT of the depths of darkling life, where sin
Laughs piteously that sorrow should not know
Her own ill name, nor woe be counted woe;
Where hate and craft and lust make drearier din
Than sounds through dreams that grief holds revel in, —
What charm of joy-bells ringing, streams that flow,
Winds that blow healing in each note they blow,
Is this that the outer darkness hears begin?

O sweetest heart of all thy time save one,
Star seen for love's sake nearest to the sun,
Hung lamplike o'er a dense and doleful city,
Not Shakespeare's very spirit, howe'er more great,
Than thine toward man was more compassionate,
Nor gave Christ praise from lips more sweet with pity.

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

A WILD moon riding high from cloud to cloud,
That sees and sees not, glimmering far beneath,
Hell's children revel along the shuddering heath
With dirge-like mirth and raiment like a shroud;
A worse fair face than witchcraft's, passion-proud,
With brows blood-flecked behind their bridal wreath,
And lips that bade the assassin's sword find sheath
Deep in the heart whereto love's heart was vowed;
A game of close contentious crafts and creeds
Played till white England bring black Spain to shame;
A son's bright sword and brighter soul, whose deeds
High conscience lights for mother's love and fame;
Pure gypsy flowers, and poisonous courtly weeds:
Such tokens and such trophies crown thy name.

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

TOM, if they loved thee best who called thee Tom,
What else may all men call thee, seeing thus bright
Even yet the laughing and the weeping light
That still thy kind old eyes are kindled from?
Small care was thine to assail and overcome
Time and his child Oblivion: yet of right
Thy name has part with names of lordlier might
For English love and homely sense of home,
Whose fragrance keeps thy small sweet bay-leaf young,
And gives it place aloft among thy peers,
Whence many a wreath once higher strong Time has hurled;
And this thy praise is sweet on Shakespeare's tongue, —
"O good old man! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world!"

JOHN MARSTON.

THE bitterness of death and bitterer scorn
Breathes from the broad-leafed aloe-plant whence thou
Wast fain to gather for thy bended brow
A chaplet by no gentler forehead worn.
Grief deep as hell, wrath hardly to be borne,
Ploughed up thy soul till round the furrowing plough
The strange black soil foamed, as a black-beaked prow
Bids night-black waves foam where its track has torn.
Too faint the phrase for thee that only saith
Scorn bitterer than the bitterness of death
Pervades the sullen splendor of thy soul,
Where hate and pain make war on force and fraud,
And all the strengths of tyrants; whence unflawed
It keeps this noble heart of hatred whole.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HIGH priest of Homer, not elect in vain,
Deep trumpets blow before thee, shawms behind
Mix music with the rolling wheels that wind
Slow through the laboring triumph of thy train:

Fierce history, molten in thy forging brain,
Takes form and fire and fashion from thy mind,
Tormented and transmuted out of kind:
But howsoe'er thou shift thy strenuous strain,
Like Tailor[1] smooth, like Fisher[2] swollen, and now
Grim Yarrington[3] scarce bloodier marked than thou,
Then bluff as Mayne's[4] or broad-mouthed Barry's[5] glee,
Proud still with hoar predominance of brow
And beard like foam swept off the broad blown sea,
Where'er thou go, men's reverence goes with thee.

JOHN DAY.

Day was a full-blown flower in heaven, alive
With murmuring joy of bees and birds a-swarm,
When in the skies of song yet flushed and warm
With music where all passion seems to strive
For utterance, all things bright and fierce to drive
Struggling along the splendor of the storm,
Day for an hour put off his fiery form,
And golden murmurs from a golden hive
Across the strong bright summer wind were heard,
And laughter soft as smiles from girls at play,
And loud from lips of boys brow-bound with May.

[1] Author of The Hog hath lost his Pearl.
[2] Author of Fuimus Troes, or the True Trojans.
[3] Author of Two Tragedies in One.
[4] Author of The City Match.
[5] Author of Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks.

Our mightiest age let fall its gentlest word,
When Song, in semblance of a sweet small bird,
Lit fluttering on the light swift hand of Day.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

The dusk of day's decline was hard on dark
When evening trembled round thy glowworm lamp
That shone across her shades and dewy damp,
A small clear beacon whose benignant spark
Was gracious yet for loiterers' eyes to mark,
Though changed the watchword of our English camp
Since the outposts rang round Marlowe's lion ramp,
When thy steed's pace went ambling round Hyde Park.

And in the thickening twilight under thee
Walks Davenant, pensive in the paths where he,
The blithest throat that ever carolled love
In music made of morning's merriest heart,
Glad Suckling, stumbled from his seat above,
And reeled on slippery roads of alien art.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

Sons born of many a loyal Muse to Ben,
All true-begotten, warm with wine or ale,
Bright from the broad light of his presence, hail!
Prince Randolph, highest his throne of all his men,

Being highest in spirit and heart who hailed him then
King, nor might other spread so blithe a sail:
Cartwright, a soul pent in with narrower pale,
Praised of thy sire for manful might of pen:
Marmion, whose verse keeps alway keen and fine
The perfume of their Apollonian wine,
Who shared with that stout sire of all and thee
The exuberant chalice of his echoing shrine:
Is not your praise writ broad in gold which he
Inscribed, that all who praise his name should see?

ANONYMOUS PLAYS: "ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM."

Mother whose womb brought forth our man of men,
Mother of Shakespeare, whom all time acclaims
Queen therefore, sovereign queen of English dames,
Throned higher than sat thy sonless empress then,
Was it thy son's young passion-guided pen
Which drew, reflected from encircling flames,
A figure marked by the earlier of thy names
Wife, and from all her wedded kinswomen
Marked by the sign of murderess? Pale and great,
Great in her grief and sin, but in her death
And anguish of her penitential breath
Greater than all her sin or sin-born fate,
She stands, the holocaust of dark desire,
Clothed round with song forever as with fire.

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

Ye too, dim watchfires of some darkling hour,
Whose fame forlorn time saves not nor proclaims
Forever, but forgetfulness defames,
And darkness and the shadow of death devour,
Lift up ye too your light, put forth your power,
Let the far twilight feel your soft small flames,
And smile, albeit night name not even their names,
Ghost by ghost passing, flower blown down on flower;
That sweet-tongued shadow, like a star's that passed
Singing, and light was from its darkness cast
To paint the face of Painting fair with praise:[1]
And that wherein forefigured smiles the pure
Fraternal face of Wordsworth's Eldure
Between two child-faced masks of merrier days.[2]

ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

More yet and more, and yet we mark not all:
The Warning fain to bid fair women heed
Its hard brief note of deadly doom and deed;[3]
The verse that strewed too thick with flowers the hall
Whence Nero watched his fiery festival;[4]
That iron page wherein men's eyes who read
See, bruised and marred between two babes that bleed,

[1] Doctor Dodypol.
[2] Nobody and Somebody.
[3] A Warning for Fair Women.
[4] The Tragedy of Nero.

A mad red-handed husband's martyr fall;[1]
The scene which crossed and streaked with mirth the strife
Of Henry with his sons and witchlike wife;[2]
And that sweet pageant of the kindly fiend,
Who, seeing three friends in spirit and heart made one,
Crowned with good hap the true-love wiles he screened
In the pleached lanes of pleasant Edmonton.[3]

THE MANY.

I.

GREENE, garlanded with February's few flowers,
Ere March came in with Marlowe's rapturous rage;
Peele, from whose hand the sweet white locks of age
Took the mild chaplet woven of honored hours;
Nash, laughing hard; Lodge, flushed from lyric bowers;
And Lilly, a goldfinch in a twisted cage,
Fed by some gay great lady's pettish page
Till short sweet songs gush clear like short spring showers;
Kid, whose grim sport still gambolled over graves;
And Chettle, in whose fresh funereal verse
Weeps Marian yet on Robin's wildwood hearse;
Cooke, whose light boat of song one soft breath saves,
Sighed from a maiden's amorous mouth averse:
Live likewise ye: Time takes not you for slaves.

[1] A Yorkshire Tragedy.
[2] Look about you.
[3] The Merry Devil of Edmonton.

THE MANY.

II.

HAUGHTON, whose mirth gave woman all her will;
Field, bright and loud with laughing flower and bird,
And keen alternate notes of laud and gird;
Barnes, darkening once with Borgia's deeds the quill
Which tuned the passion of Parthenophil;
Blithe burly Porter, broad and bold of word;
Wilkins, a voice with strenuous pity stirred:
Turk Mason; Brewer, whose tongue drops honey still;
Rough Rowley, handling song with Esau's hand;
Light Nabbes; lean Sharpham, rank and raw by turns,
But fragrant with a forethought once of Burns;
Soft Davenport, sad-robed, but blithe and bland;
Brome, gypsy-led across the woodland ferns:
Praise be with all, and place among our band.

EPILOGUE.

OUR mother, which wast twice, as history saith,
Found first among the nations: once, when she
Who bore thine ensign saw the God in thee
Smite Spain, and bring forth Shakespeare; once, when death
Shrank, and Rome's bloodhounds cowered, at Milton's breath:
More than thy place, then first among the free;
More than that sovereign lordship of the sea
Bequeathed to Cromwell from Elizabeth;

More than thy fiery guiding-star, which Drake
Hailed, and the deep saw lit again for Blake;
More than all deeds wrought of thy strong right hand, —
This praise keeps most thy fame memorial strong,
That thou wast head of all thes streams of song,
And time bows down to thee a Shakespeare's land.

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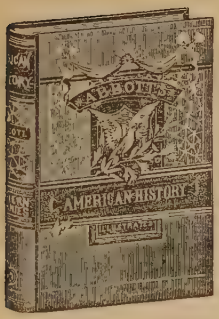

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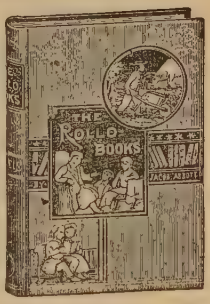

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